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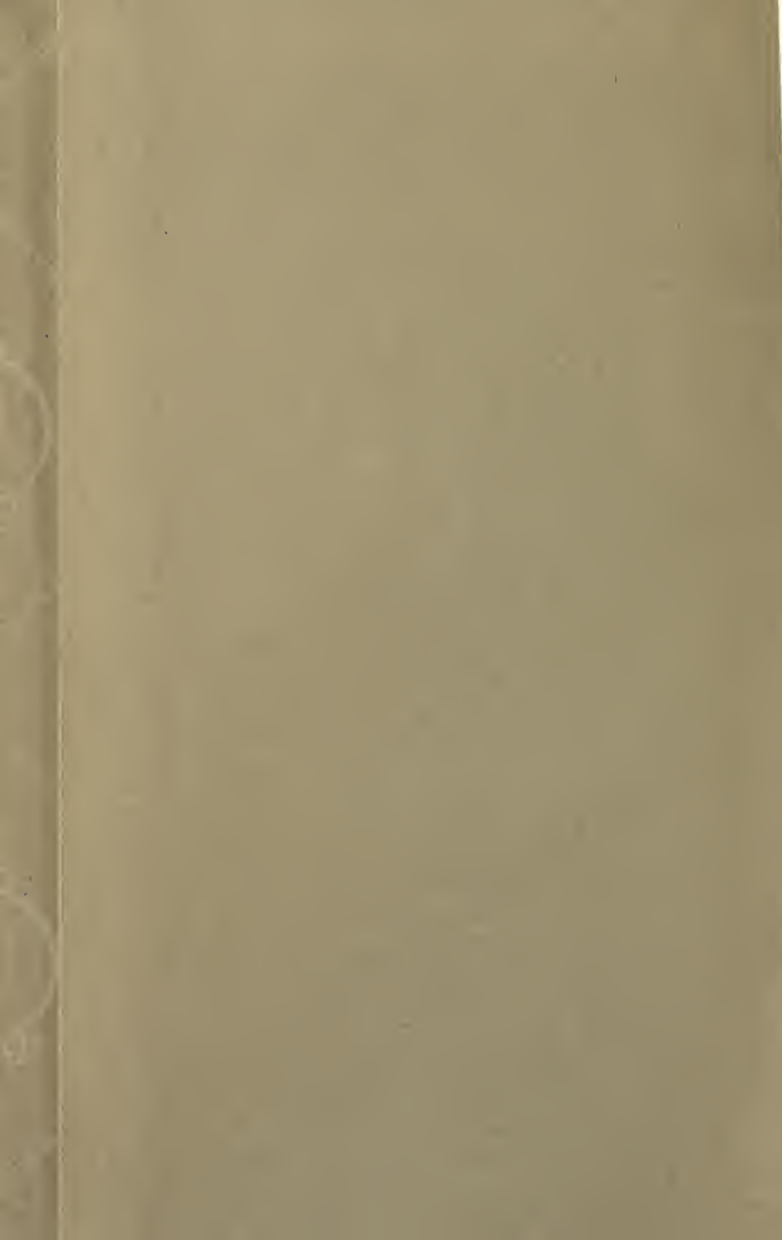

LITERARY STYLE,

AND OTHER ESSAYS.

BY

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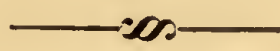

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Literary Style.

WITHIN a few years a fresh interest has been awakened, among writers and critics, in literary style. It is beginning to be felt more keenly than for a long time before, that, as the value of the materials of a building, whatever their cost, depends mainly upon the skill with which they are put together, so in literary architecture it is in the manner in which the ideas are fitted together into a symmetrical and harmonious whole, as well as adorned and embellished, that, quite as much as the ideas themselves, constitutes the worth of an essay, an oration, or a poem. As the diamond or the emerald,—even the Kohinoor itself,—has little beauty as it lies in the mine, but must be freed from its incrustations, and cut and polished by the lapidary, before it is fit to blaze in the coronet of a queen, or to sparkle on the breast of beauty, so thought in the ore has little use or charm, and sparkles and captivates only when polished and set in cunning sentences by the literary artist. But there is another and more potent reason for the growing estimation of style. As an instrument for winning the public attention, for saving the reader all needless labor, and for keeping a hold on the grateful memory, its value cannot be easily exaggerated. A hundred years ago, in the days of stage-coaches and ramage presses, when literature did not come to us in bales, and to be a man of one book was no disgrace, style might have been regarded as a luxury; but in this age of steam-presses and electrotype-printing, with its thousand distractions from study, and its deluge of new publications that must be skimmed by all who would keep abreast with the intelligence of

the time, this element of literature is swiftly acquiring a new utilitarian value. When we consider that Germany alone prints 15,000 books a year; that one library only,—the National at Paris,—contains 150,000 acres of printed paper; that in one ramified science, e. g. chemistry, the student needs fourteen years barely to overtake knowledge as it now stands,—while, nevertheless, the two lobes of the human brain are not a whit larger to-day than in the days of Adam; that, even after deducting all the old books which the process of "natural selection" and the "survival of the fittest" has spared us from reading, the remnant even of literary and other masterpieces, which cannot be stormed by the most valiant reader, but must be acquired by slow "sap," is simply appalling; and, finally that even the labor-saving machinery of periodical literature, which was to give us condensations and essences in place of the bulky originals, is already overwhelming us, with an inundation of its own,—it is easy to see that the *manner* in which a writer communicates his ideas is hardly less important than the ideas themselves.

But what, it may be asked, do we mean by style? We shall not attempt any technical definition, but simply say that by it we understand, first of all, such a choice and arrangement of words as shall convey the author's meaning most clearly and exactly, in the logical order of the ideas; secondly, such a balance of clause and structural grace of sentence as shall satisfy the sense of beauty; and, lastly, such a propriety, economy, and elegance of expression, as shall combine business-like brevity with artistic beauty. All these qualities will be found united in styles of the highest order; and therefore style has been well defined as an artistic expedient to make reading easy, and to perpetuate the life of written thought.

Style, in this sense, is, and ever has been, the most vital element of literary immortality. If we look at the brief list of books which, among the millions that have sunk into oblivion, have kept afloat on the stream of time, we

shall find that they have owed their buoyancy to this quality. More than any other, it is a writer's own property; and no one, not even time itself, can rob him of it, or even diminish its value. Facts may be forgotten, learning may grow commonplace, startling truths dwindle into mere truisms; but a grand or beautiful style can never lose its freshness or its charm. It is the felicity and idiomatic *naïveté* of his diction that has raised the little fishing-book of Walton, the linen-draper, to the dignity of a classic, and a similar charm keeps the writings of Addison as green as in the days of Queen Anne. Even works of transcendent intellectual merit may fail of high success through lack of this property; while works of second and even third-rate value,—works which swarm with pernicious errors, with false statements and bad logic,—may obtain a passport to futurity through the witchery of style. The crystal clearness and matchless grace of Paley's periods, which were the envy of Coleridge, continue to attract readers, in spite of his antiquated science and dangerous philosophy; and a similar remark may be made of Bolingbroke. The racy, sinewy, idiomatic style of Cobbett, the greatest master of Saxon-English in this century, compels attention to the arch-radical to-day as it compelled attention years ago. Men are captivated by his style, who are shocked alike by his opinions and his egotism, and offended by the profusion of italics which, like ugly finger-posts, disfigure his page, and emphasize till emphasis loses its power. For the pomp and splendor of his style, "glowing with oriental color, and rapid as a charge of Arab horse," even more than for his colossal erudition, is Gibbon admired; it is "the ordered march of his lordly prose, stately as a Roman legion's," that is the secret of Macaulay's charm; and it is the unstudied grace of Hume's periods which renders him, in spite of his unfairness and defective erudition, in spite of his toryism and infidelity, the popular historian of England.

Dr. Johnson, writing in the "Idler" upon the fate of books, declares that if an author would be long remembered, he must choose a theme of enduring interest; but the interest with which the "Provincial Letters" are read to-day, by men who never look into the pages of the "Rambler" or the "Vanity of Human Wishes," shows that the manner in which a subject is treated is often of more importance than the matter. It is one of the most signal triumphs of genius that it can thus not only overcome the disadvantages of a topic of ephemeral interest, but even give permanent popularity to works which the progress of knowledge renders imperfect; that it can so stamp itself upon its productions, and mould them into beauty, as to make men unwilling to return the gold to the melting-pot, and work it up afresh. What is it but the severe and exquisite beauty of their form which has given such vitality to the ancient classics, that time, which "antiquates antiquity itself," has left them untouched? Why do we never tire of lingering over the pages of Virgil, unless we are drawn to them by "the haunting music of his verse, the rhythm and fall of his language?" "The ancients alone," it has been truly said, "possessed in perfection the art of *embalming* thought. The severe taste which surrounds them has operated like the pure air of Egypt in preserving the sculptures and paintings of that country; where travellers tell us that the traces of the chisel are often as sharp, and the colors of the paintings as bright, as if the artists had quitted their work but yesterday."

In works of art, or pure literature, the style is even more important than the thought, for the reason that the style is the artistic part, the only thing in which the writer can show originality. The raw material out of which essays, poems and novels are made, is limited in quantity, and easily exhausted. The number of human passions upon which changes can be rung is very small; and the situations to which their play gives rise may be counted on the

fingers. Love returned and love unrequited, jealousy and envy, pride, avarice, generosity and revenge, are the hinges upon which all poems and romances turn, and these passions have been the same ever since Adam. I live, I love,—I am happy, I am wretched,—I was once young,—I must die,—are very simple ideas, of which no one can claim a copyright; yet out of these few root-ideas has flowed all the poetry the world knows, and all that it ever will know. In Homer and Virgil, Plautus and Terence, we have an epitome of all the men and women on the planet, and the writer who would add to their number must either repeat them or portray monstrosities. Joubert felt this when he cried: "Oh, how difficult it is to be at once ingenious and sensible!" La Bruyère, long before him, had felt it when he exclaimed: "All is said, and one comes too late, now that there have been men for seven thousand years, and men that have thought." It is common to talk of originality as the distinguishing mark of genius, when, on the contrary, it is essentially receptive and passive in its nature. Its power lies, not in finding out new material, but in imparting new life to whatever it discovers, new or old; not in creating its own fuel, but in fanning its collected fuel into a flame. All the thought, the stuff or substance, of a new poem or essay, is necessarily commonplace. The thing said has been said in some form a thousand times before; the writer's merit lies in the *way* he says it. We talk, indeed, of *creative* intellects, but only Omnipotence can create; man can only *combine*. As Praxiteles, when he wrought his statue of Venus, did not produce it by a pure effort of the imagination, but selected the most beautiful parts of the most beautiful figures he could obtain as models, and combined them into a harmonious whole, so, to a great extent, are literary master pieces produced. Wherein lies the charm of the "golden-mouthed" Jeremy Taylor? Is it in the absolute novelty of his thoughts?—or is it not rather in the fact that, as De Quincey says, old thoughts

are surveyed from novel stations and under various angles, and a field absolutely exhausted throws up externally fresh verdure under the fructifying lava of burning imagery? Even the wizard of Avon can strictly produce nothing new; he can only call in the worn coin of thought, melt it in his own crucible, and issue it with a fresh superscription and an increased value.

What would De Quincey be without his style? Rob him of the dazzling fence of his rhetoric, his word-painting, and rhythm,—strip him of his organ-like fugues, his majestic swells and dying falls,—leave to him only the bare, naked ideas of his essays,—and he will be De Quincey no longer. It would be like robbing the rose of its color and perfume, or taking from an autumnal landscape its dreamy, hazy atmosphere and its gorgeous dyes. Take the finest English classic, The Fairy Queen, L'Allegro or Il Penseroso, Midsummer Night's Dream; strip it of music. color, wit, alliteration,—the marriage of exquisite thoughts to exquisite language,—all that belongs to form as distinguished from the substance,—and what will the residuum be? All the ideas in these works are as old as creation. They were everywhere in the air, and any other poet had as good a right to use them as Milton, Spenser and Shakspeare. That critical mouser, the Rev. John Mitford, in his notes to Gray's poems, has shown that hardly an image, an epithet, or even a line in them originated with the ostensible author. Gray cribbed from Pope, Pope from Dryden, Dryden from Milton, Milton from the Elizabethan classics, they from the Latin poets, the Latin from the Greek, and so on till we come to the original Prometheus, who stole the fire directly from Heaven. But does this lessen the merit of these authors? Grant that the finest passages in poetry are to a great extent but embellished recollections of other men's productions; does this detract one jot or tittle from the poet's fame? The great thinkers of every age do not differ from the little ones so much in having different thoughts,

as in sifting, classifying and focalizing the same thoughts, and, above all, in giving them to the world in the pearl of exquisite and adequate expression. Give to two painters the same pigments, and one of them will produce a "Transfiguration," and the other will exhaust his genius upon the sign-board of a country tavern; as out of the same stones may be reared the most beautiful or the most unsightly of edifices,—the Parthenon of Athens, or an American court-house.

What is the secret of the popularity of our leading journals? Is it their prodigious wisdom, their prophetic sagacity, the breadth and accuracy of their knowledge, their depth and range of thought,—in short, their grasp of the themes they discuss? No; the newspaper which each man reads with the most delight is that which has mastered most perfectly the art of putting things; which flatters his self-esteem by giving to his own inchoate ideas artistical development and expression; which, in short, is a mirror in which Jones or Brown can see with his own eyes the Socrates he has taken himself to be.

Perhaps no other writer of the day has more powerfully influenced the English-speaking race than Carlyle. Beyond all other living men he has, in certain important respects, shaped and colored the thought of his time. As a historian, he may be almost said to have revolutionized the French Revolution, so different is the picture which other writers have given us from that which blazes upon us under the lurid torchlight of his genius. To those who who have read his great prose epic, it will be henceforth impossible to remember the scenes he has described through any other medium. As Helvellyn and Skiddaw are seen now only through the glamor of Wordsworth's genius.—as Jura and Mont Blanc are transfigured, even to the tourist, by the magic of Byron and Coleridge,—so to Carlyle's readers Danton and Robespierre, Mirabeau and Tinville, will be forever what he has painted them. No other writer equals the great Scotchman in the Rem-

brandt-like lights and shadows of his style. While, as Mr. McCarthy says, he is endowed with a marvellous power of depicting stormy scenes and rugged daring natures, yet "at times, strange, wild, piercing notes of the pathetic are heard through his fierce bursts of eloquence like the wail of a clarion thrilling beneath the blasts of a storm." His pages abound in pictures of human misery sadder than poet ever drew, more vivid and startling than artist ever painted. In his conflict with shams and quackeries he has dealt yeoman's blows, and made the bankrupt institutions of England ring with their own hollowness. What is the secret of his power? Is it the absolute *novelty* of his thoughts? In no great writer of equal power shall we find such an absolute dearth of new ideas. The gospel of noble manhood which he so passionately preaches is as old as Solomon. Its cardinal ideas have been echoed and reëchoed through the ages till they have become the stalest of truisms. That brains are the measure of worth; that duty, without reward, is is the end of life; that "work is worship;" that a quack is a falsehood incarnate; that on a lie nothing can be built; that the victim of wrong suffers less than the wrong-doer; that man has a soul which cannot be satisfied with meats or drinks, fine palaces and millions of money, or stars and ribands; this is the one single peal of bells upon which the seer of Chelsea has rung a succession of changes, with hardly a note of variation, for over half a century.

Anything more musty or somniferous than these utterances, so far as their substance is concerned, can hardly be found outside of Blair's sermons. Coming from a common writer, they would induce a sleepiness which neither "poppy, mandragora, nor all the drowsy sirups of the world" could rival in producing. But preached in the strong, rugged words, and with the tremendous emphasis of Carlyle,—enforced by sensational contrasts and epic interrogations,—made vivid by personification, apostro-

phe, hyperbole, and enlivened by pictorial illustration,—these old saws, which are really the essence of all morality, instead of making us yawn, startle us like original and novel fancies. His imagination transfigures the meanest things, and conveys the commonest thoughts in words that haunt the memory. In his fine characterizations of Schiller and Alfieri, how admirably he contrasts the two men: "The mind of the one is like the ocean, beautiful in its strength, smiling in the radiance of summer, and washing luxuriant and romantic shores; that of the other is like some black, unfathomable lake placed far mid the melancholy mountains; bleak, solitary, desolate, but girdled with grim sky-piercing cliffs, overshadowed with storms, and illuminated only by the red glare of the lightning." How vividly by a few suggestive words he brings Johnson before us,—not the Johnson of Macaulay, the squalid, unkempt giant in dirty linen, with straining eye-balls, greedily devouring his victuals,—not the husk or *larvæ* of the literary leviathan, the poor scrofula-scarred body without the soul, but Johnson "with his great greedy heart and unspeakable chaos of thoughts; stalking mournful on this earth, eagerly devouring what spiritual thing he could come at,"—in short, the grand old moral hero as he *is*, in the very centre and core of his being! A kind of grim Cyclopean humor gives additional pungency to Carlyle's style, which,—"if it is a Joseph's coat of many colors, is dyed red with the blood of passionate conviction." Cherishing, and even parading, an utter contempt for literary art, he sacrifices truth itself to be artistical, and is in fact, with many glaring faults, one of the greatest literary artists of the time.

Why, to take an opposite illustration, has John Neal, in spite of his acknowledged genius, been so speedily forgotten by the public whose eye he once so dazzled?—why, but because, holding the absurd theory that a man should write as he talks, and despising the niceties of skill, he

bestows no artistic finish on his literary gems, but like the gorgeous East,

> "showers from his lap
> Barbaric pearls and gold,"

with all their incrustations "thick upon them"? With less prodigality of thought and more patience in execution, he might have won a broad and enduring fame; but, as it is, he is known to but few, and by them viewed as a meteor in the literary firmament, rather than as a fixed star or luminous planet. Washington Irving has probably less genius than Neal; but by his artistic skill he would make more of a Scotch pebble than Neal of the crown jewel of the Emperor of all the Russias.

That we have not exaggerated the value of style,—that it is, in truth, an alchemy which can transmute the basest metal into gold,—will appear still more clearly if we compare the literatures of different nations. That there are national as well as individual styles, with contrasts equally salient or glaring, is known to every scholar. Metaphors and similes are racy of the soil in which they grow, as you taste, it is said, the lava in the vines on the slopes of Ætna. As *thinkers*, the Germans have to-day no equals on the globe. In their systems of philosophy the speculative intellect of our race,—its power of long, concatenated, exhaustive thinking,—seems to have reached its culmination. Never content with a surface examination of any subject, they dig down to the "hard pan," the eternal granite which underlies all the other strata of truth. As compilers of dictionaries, as accumulators of facts, as producers of thought in the ore, their bookmakers have no peers. The German language, too, must be admitted to be one of the most powerful instruments of thought and feeling to which human wit has given birth. But all these advantages are, to a great extent, neutralized by the frightful heaviness and incredible clumsiness of the German literary style. Whether as a providential protection

of other nations against the foggy metaphysics and subtle skepticism of that country, or because to have given it a genius for artistic composition as well as thought, would have been an invidious partiality, it is plain that, in the distribution of good things, the advantages of form were not granted to the Teutons. In Bacon's phrase, they are "the Herculeses, not the Adonises of literature." They are, with a few noble exceptions, the hewers of wood and drawers of water for all the other literatures of the world. The writers of other countries, being blessed more or less with the synthetic and artistic power which they lack, pillage mercilessly, without acknowledgment, the storehouses which they have laboriously filled, and dressing up the stolen materials in attractive forms, pass them off as their own property. It is one of the paradoxes of literary history, that a people who have done more for the textual accuracy and interpretation of the Greek and Roman classics than all the other European nations put together,—who have taught the world the classic tongues with pedagogic authority,—should have caught so little of the inspiration, spirit, and style of those eternal models.

The fatigue which the German style inflicts upon the human brain is even greater than that which their barbarous Gothic letter, a relic of the fifteenth century, blackening all the page, inflicts upon the eye. The principal faults of this style are involution, prolixity, and obscurity. The sentences are interminable in length, stuffed with parentheses within parentheses, and as full of folds as a sleeping boa-constrictor. Of paragraphs, of beauty in the balancing and structure of periods, and of the art by which a succession of periods may modify each other, the German prose writer has apparently no conception. Instead of breaking up his "cubic thought" into small and manageable pieces, he quarries it out in huge, unwieldy masses, indifferent to its shape, structure or polish. He gives you real gold, but it is gold in the ore, mingled with

quartz, dirt and sand, hardly ever gold polished into splendor, or minted into coin. Every German, according to De Quincy, regards a sentence in the light of a package, and a package not for the mail-coach, but for the waggon, into which it is his privilege to crowd as much as he possibly can. Having framed a sentence, therefore he next proceeds to pack it, which is effected partly by unwieldy tails and codicils, but chiefly by enormous parenthetic involutions. All qualifications, limitations, exceptions, illustrations, and even hints and insinuations, that they may be grasped at once and presented in one view, are "stuffed and violently rammed into the bowels of the principal proposition." What being of flesh and blood, with average lungs, can go through a book made up of such sentences, some of them twenty or thirty lines in length, with hardly a break or a solitary semicolon to relieve the eye or cheat the painful journey, without gasping for breath, and utterly forgetting the beginning, especially when a part of the poor dislocated verb, upon which the whole meaning of the sentence hinges, is withheld till the close? Rufus Choate had a genius for long periods; his eulogy on Webster contains one which stretches over more than four pages; but even he yields to Kant. It is said that some of the latter's sentences have been carefully measured by a carpenter's rule, and found to measure two feet eight by six inches. Who, but a trained intellectual pedestrian, a Rowell or Weston, could hope to travel through such a labyrinth of words, in which there is sometimes no halting-place for three closely-printed octavo pages, without being footsore, or bursting a blood-vessel? Is it strange that other peoples, who do not think long windedness excusable because Kant has shown that Time and Space have no actual existence, but are only forms of thought, are offended by a literature that abounds in such Chinese puzzles? Can we wonder that the German bullion of thought, however

weighty or valuable, has to be coined in France before it can pass into the general circulation of the world?

In direct contrast to the heavy, dragging German style, is the brisk, vivacious, sparkling style of the French. All the qualities which the Teutons lack,—form, method, proportion, grace, refinement, the stamp of good society,—the Gallic writers have in abundance; and these qualities are found not only in the masters, like Pascal, Voltaire, Courier, or Sand, but in the second and third-class writers, like Taine and Prevost-Paradol. Search any of the French writers from Montaigne to Renan, and you will have to hunt as long for an obscure sentence as in a German author for a clear one. Dip where you will into their pages, you find every sentence written as with a sunbeam. They state their meaning so clearly, that not only can you not mistake it, but you feel that no other proper collocation of words is conceivable. It is like casting to a statue,—the metal flows into its mould, and is there fixed forever. If, in reading a German book, you seem to be jolting over a craggy mountain road in one of their lumbering *eilwagen*, ironically called "post-haste" chaises in reading a French work you seem to be rolling on C springs along a velvety turf, or on a road that has just been macadamized. The only draw-back to your delight is, that it spoils your taste for other writing; after sipping Château-Margaux at its most velvety age, the mouth puckers at Rhine wine or Catawba. This supremacy of the French style is so generally acknowledged, that the French have become for Europe the interpreters of other races to each other. They are the Jews of the intellectual market,—the money-changers and brokers of the wealth of the world. The great merits of Sir William Hamilton were unknown to his countrymen till they were revealed by the kindly pen of Cousin; and Sydney Smith hardly exaggerated when he said of Dumont's translation of Bentham, that the great apostle of utilitarianism was washed, dressed, and forced into clean linen by a Frenchman be-

fore he was intelligible even to the English Benthamites. It is sometimes said that French literature is all style; that its writers have labored so exclusively to make the language a perfect vehicle of wit and wisdom, that they have nothing to convey. If in a German work the meaning is entangled in the words, and "you cannot see the woods for the trees," in the French work the words themselves are the chief object of attention. But the critic who says this is surely not familiar with Pascal, Bossuet, D'Alembert, De Staël, DeMaistre, Villemain. In these and many other writers that we might name, there is such a solidity of thought with an exquisite transparency of style, so subtle an interfusion of sound and sense, so perfect an equipoise of meaning and melody, as to satisfy alike the artistic taste of the literary connoisseur and the deeper cravings of the thinker and scholar. The real weakness of the French to-day is their Chinese isolation and exclusiveness, their ignorance of other nations, their want of cosmopolitan breadth, and of all the other qualities which men that hug their own firesides,—that live, as Rabelais says, all their lives in a barrel, and look out only at the bunghole,—are sure to lack. Rooted to their native soil, seeing no countries or peoples, and despising all literatures but their own, they lose the comparative standpoint which, it has been said truly, is the great conquest of our century,—which has revolutionized history, and created social science and the science of language.

There is a saying of Buffon's that "style is *of* the man,"—not, as so often quoted, "the style is the man,"—which is but a repetition of the saying of Erasmus, *qualis homo, talis oratio;* as is the man, so is his speech. As we form our impressions of men, not so much from what they actually say, as from their way of saying it,—their looks, manner, tones of voice, and other peculiarities,—so we catch glimpses of an author between the lines, and detect his idiosyncrasies even when he tries hardest to

hide them. The latent disposition of the man peeps through his words, in spite of himself, and vulgarity, malignity, and littleness of soul, however carefully cloaked, are betrayed by the very phrases and images of their opposites. Marivaux declares that style has a sex; but we may go farther, and say that literature has its comparative anatomy, and a page or a paragraph will enable a skilful hand to construct the skeleton. "Every sentence of the great writer," says Alexander Smith, "is an autograph. If Milton had endorsed a bill with half-a-dozen blank verse lines, it would be as good as his name, and would be accepted as good evidence in court." How plainly do we see in the swallow-like gyrations of Montaigne's style the very veins, muscles, and tendons of his moral anatomy? How glaringly he betrays his self-complacency by the very air and tone of his self-humiliations! Again: how visibly do the despotic will, the imperial positiveness and the oriental imagination of Napoleon stamp themselves on his style,—in that hurried, abrupt rhythm, under which, as Sainte-Beuve says, we feel palpitating the genius of action and the demon of battles! What perfect simplicity characterizes the writings, as it does the actions, of Julius Cæsar! His art is unconscious, as the highest art always is, and his style has been well compared by Cicero to an undraped human figure, perfect in all its lines as nature made it.

How grave, courtly, and high-mannered, how politic and guarded, like himself, are the utterances of Bacon? What serenity of temper is expressed in "the sleepy smile that lies so benignly on the sweet and serious diction of Izaak Walton!" What haughtiness and savage impatience of contradiction,—what egotism and contempt of conventional opinions,—are stamped on the plain, blunt and often coarse periods of Swift; and, on the other hand, what an urbanity reveals itself in the almost perfect manner, so easy and high-bred,—courteous, not courtier-like, as Bulwer says,—of the gentle Addison! It has been

happily said that there is no gall in his ink, and, if i kills, it is after the manner of those perfumed poison which are not less grateful than deadly. Again, wha fierceness breathes in the short, dagger-like sentences o Junius; and how, on the contrary, the shyness of Lamb' nature,—his love of quip, and whimsey, and old black letter authors,—peeps out in his style, with its antiqu words, and quaint convolutions, and doublings back or itself! Dean Swift would have torn to pieces a lamb like a wolf; but the loving "Elia" would have tried to coax a wolf into a lamb. How quickly "South is discovered by the lash of a sentence, and Andrews by the mechanism of his exposition!" Did any mirror, even of French plate glass, ever reflect any man's outer configuration more vividly and distinctly than the strange inner nature of Sir Thomas Browne is mirrored in his periods? What a revelation we have of his inmost self,—what a picture of his wit, imagination, portentous memory, insatiable curiosity, "humorous sadness," pedantry, and love of crotchets and hobbies, even "a whole stable-full,"—in the quaint analogies, the grotesque fancies, the airy paradoxes, the fine and dainty fretwork, the subtle and stately music, the amazing Latinisms, and the riotous paradoxes and eloquent epigrams of the old knight's style! Again, how plainly the hard, severe, antique cast of Guizot's intellect is seen in his manner of writing, which is so weighty and impressive, but never picturesque or playful! How fit a vehicle is it for the thoughts of that lofty mind whose ideas, as soon as they enter it, lose their freshness and become antique,—of whom it has been said: "That which he has known only since morning he appears to have known from all eternity!"

If a man is a sham and a hypocrite, his manner will be sure to blab against him. It is a Frenchman, not a Puritan, who teaches that even the painter's work is deteriorated by his life. "What must the artist have on his canvas? That which he has in his imagination. What can

he have in his imagination? That which he has in his life." So with literature; it is even more tell-tale than any other art. How easily do we distinguish between the passages which came from the author's heart and those in which his inspiration failed! What thoughtful reader does not know that any doubt or dogmatism; any languor in feeling, or shallowness of insight; any distraction or loss of interest in the theme; any weariness of work or insatiable passion for it; all the shadows of his soul, and all the intermissions of his sensibility,—stamp themselves on the printed page as distinctly as if the writer had purposely told the world his secrets? Even when a writer tries to make a mask of his style, he almost inevitably betrays himself by a pet phrase or mannerism, like Macaulay's antitheses or Cicero's *esse videatur*. How admirably, with one stroke of the pen, did Sydney Smith characterize Jeffrey, when he wrote to a friend: "Jeffrey has been here with his *adjectives*, which always travel with him!" How vainly does Gibbon, that great master of the art of sneering, try to mask his hostility to Christianity by suggestion and equivocation! Instead of asserting, he insinuates; and stabs Christianity, not directly, but by side thrusts of parenthesis, innuendo, and implication.

Again, there are writers, and those, too, of high ability, who betray themselves by certain tricks and devices of style which are purely mechanical, and which, by careful study, we can learn and imitate. Whatever the witchery of their manner, however wondrous their triumphs over the difficulties of expression, we can mark the process by which they achieve their results almost as easily as we can note the manner in which an artizan puts together the pieces of a watch. Macaulay, for example, by his essays and his history, has won a popularity almost without parallel, because he expresses in vivid language thoughts easy to grasp, and because his power of lucid, swift, brilliant statement has never been surpassed. He

is, too, a remarkably correct writer, uniting splendor and precision as few have done before. On the other hand, he is possessed with the very demon of mannerism, and his tricks of style are so transparent that the veriest novice may detect them. The peculiar swing and swell of his sentences, the epigrammatic antitheses and balanced clauses, the short sentences between the long, "that like the fire of sharp-shooters through cannon, break the volume of sound," are not the product of the highest art. Though pleasing at first, they tire at last by their unshaded brilliancy and unvarying monotony. They remind one of the measured march of the grenadier to the music of the fife and drum, rather than of the free and lofty movement of the giant. Again, Macaulay's hatred of pronouns, limitations, and qualifications; the lack of organic unity in his sentences,—of flexibility, airiness, and grace,—and especially of those reticences, half-tones, and subtle interblendings of thought which are among the lamps of style; and last, not least, his Chinese lack of perspective, and his fondness of exaggeration and startling contrasts, greatly detract from the excellence of his style. As he himself says of Tacitus, "he stimulates till stimulants lose their power." Because it is thus obtrusive by its brilliancy, and constantly calls attention to itself, Macaulay's style is necessarily second-rate. The writer who perpetually strikes you as a great literary artist is not artist enough, just as the man who strikes you as crafty is never crafty enough, because he cannot hide his craft. The painter who works consciously, and who is always ready with a reason for every touch of his brush, instead of laying tint on tint at the mandate of a mysterious instinct, we may be sure is not a Raphael or a Titian. Shakespeare has no style, because he has so many styles,—because he is forever coining new forms of expression, and breaking the moulds as fast as they are coined.

Here, had we space, we should like to speak of th

serried strength of Barrow, and the indignant brevity of Junius; of Burke, the materials of whose many-colored style were gathered from the accumulated spoils of many tongues and of all ages; of Robert Hall, the stately, imperial march of whose sentences was fashioned after no model of ancient or modern times,—a style the product not of art, but of a mind full to bursting with intellectual riches, and which though often declamatory, never wearies, because he never declaims only,—there is the bolt as well as the thunder; of South, Fuller, and Sydney Smith, the ivy-like luxuriance of whose wit conceals the robust wisdom about which it coils itself; of Walter Savage Landor, who handles the heavy weights of the language as a juggler his balls; of Froude, some of whose historical pictures are among the triumphs of English prose; of Huxley, in whose hands the hard, granitic vocabulary of science becomes malleable in such a union of sweetness with strength as to realize the Saturnian prodigy of "honey sweating from the pores of oak"; of Everett, whose level passages are never tame, and whose fine passages are never superfine; and above all, of the three great masters of style, De Quincey, Ruskin, and Newman, who have evoked, as with an enchanter's wand, the sweetness and strength of the English speech. Dr. Newman's diction, polished *ad unguem*, is the very acme of simplicity and clearness; but how the colorless diamond blade flashes as he brandishes it on the battle-field of controversy! Ask the ghost of poor Kingsley, if you doubt its edge! If we must go to other writers to see the full breadth and sweep of our language,—the majestic freedom of its unfettered movement,—we must go to Newman to see what it can do when it enters the arena a trained and girded athlete, every limb developed into its utmost symmetry, and every blow and every movement directed with definite purpose, and with most clear-sighted and deadly aim.

Again, how vividly are the sneer-like nature and the

exaggerated individualism of Emerson,—his serene, Jove like composure, and icy calmness of temperament,—mani fested in his disconnected sentences, which some wit ha compared to Lucretius's "fortuitous concourse of atoms!" Of all the masters of language (we do not say of style), h is the least sequacious. His verbal troops, like the ol Continentals, his townsmen, who fought Pitcairn, neve fire in companies, or even by platoons, but each "on hi own hook," man by man. Individually complete an self-poised, like his ideal man, his sentences are combine merely by the accident of juxtaposition, and touch with out adhering, like marbles in a bag. His language i densely suggestive, and abounds in those focalizing word and turns of expression peculiar to our day, which con dense many rays of thought into one burning phrase. I abounds, too, in those happy phrases which are

> "New as if brought from other spheres,
> Yet welcome as if known for years."

Hardly any writer surpasses Emerson in what ha been called the "polarization of language," by whic effete terms are reinforced, and ordinary words are pu to novel uses, and charged with unusual powers. But hi style lacks repose, and, like Seneca's, wearies by excessiv epigram and point. Its main defect is, that, as De Quin cey says of Hazlitt's manner, "it spreads no deep diffu sions of color, and distributes no mighty masses of shado A flash, a solitary flash, and all is gone." It is said tha Coleridge, when told that Klopstock was the Germa Milton, said: "A *very* German Milton, indeed!" A lik exclamation is provoked, when one hears the remark, s thoughtlessly made,—than which nothing marks mor clearly the prevalent insensibility to the differences c style,—that Emerson is "the American Carlyle." As we might one compare the gentle gales that fan Lake Walde to the hoarse blast that blows in winter from Ben Lom

ond; the stream that ripples along the Concord meadows "with propulsion, eddy, and sweet recoil," to the brawling and turbid Highland torrent; the notes of the robin to the scream of the northern eagle; or the cold, pitiless radiance of a sunlit iceberg to the lurid glare of the volcano, blazing with tyrannic fury through the silence and shadows of midnight, and hurling its sulphureous blackness against the starry canopy.

Of the few partial exceptions to the law that we have mentioned, Goldsmith is one of the most striking. Never was there a greater chasm between the man and the writer. Why is it that, carousing at college with midnight revellers and ale-house tipplers,—fond all his life of coarse pleasures and gambling,—at once a dandy and a sloven in his dress and life,—he is never either finical, or coarse and slovenly in his writing? Whence come the artless but unapproachable graces of that style, as chaste as it is musical and fascinating? Why does his pen never for a moment betray the disorder of his life? "Like the squalid silk-weaver, sending forth piece after piece of the purest white tissue, 'poor Noll,'" says an English writer, "sends forth from his garret only the most snowy-white products, amid circumstances of his outer life which strangely contrast with his inner life of thought. Irish to the backbone in his temperament and all his ways of life, he is yet English in almost every characteristic of his writings."

It is in this idiosyncratic peculiarity, this indefinable something which distinguishes one writer from another, and which can neither be imitated nor forged, that lies the priceless value of style. It is not, as it has been too often regarded, a cloak to masquerade in, a kind of ornament or luxury that can be indulged in at will,—a communicable trick of rhetoric or accent,—but the pure outcome of the writer's nature, the utterance of his own individuality. This sensibility of language to the impulses and qualities of him who uses it,—its flexibility in accommodating itself to all the thoughts, feelings, imaginations

and aspirations which pass within him, so as to become th
faithful expression of his personality, indicating the ver
pulsation and throbbing of his intellect, and attending o
his own inward world of thought as its very shadow,–
and, strangest, perhaps, of all, the magical power it has t
suggest the idea or mood it cannot directly convey, and t
give forth an aroma which no analysis of word or expres
sion reveals,—is one of the marvels of human speech. Be
cause language is thus the faithful mirror of our nature;
because expression is literally the pressing out into palpa
ble form of that which is already within us, it is plain tha
nothing can be more foolish than imitation. In the ol
text-books of rhetoric it used to be stated, in the word
of Johnson, that whoever wished to obtain a perfect styl
should give his days and nights to the study of Addison
But we now know that a good style can never be acquire
by aping the manner of another. The only effect of such
copying is to annihilate individuality by substituting pro
cess for inspiration, mannerism for sincerity, and calcula
tion for spontaneity. It was because he understood this
that Rembrandt had such a horror of imitation, and con
demned his pupils to solitary study, lest they should bor
row one from another. All the virtues of style are, in thei
roots, moral. They are a product, a reverberation, of th
soul itself, and can no more be artificially acquired than
the ring of silver can be acquired by lead. If a man has
a vulgar mind, he will write vulgarly; if a noble nature
he will write nobly; in every case, the beauty or ugliness
of his moral constitution, the force and keenness or th
feebleness of his logic, will be imaged in his sentences
Language, as Goldwin Smith says, "is not an instrumen
into which if a fool breathe it will make melody"; t
which we may add, that it matters little that your violi
is a genuine Cremona, and the warranted workmanship o
Straduarius,—unless you have the music of Paganini i
your soul, with his masterly touch and his exquisite ner
vous organism, in vain will you seek to conjure from th

instrument the startling notes, the tones of ecstacy or anguish, which the great magician of the bow evokes from its strings.

Of the various elements of the literary art, the most important are five, namely: simplicity, freshness or attractiveness, arrangement, choice of words, and careful preparation and finish. We might have added *clearness* were not its necessity obvious; as Dr. Jortin says, "the man that is not intelligible is not intelligent." Our space will not allow us to dwell upon these qualities, and we must content ourselves with a word or two. Of all these elements of good writing, *freshness* is the most vital; it is the quality which is felt when we turn from Blair's page to Bushnell's, from Prescott to Motley. The best recipe for the acquisition of this quality is to keep one's life fresh and vigorous. To have one's page alive, he must be alive himself. He must be constantly acquiring fresh thought; else he will only dexterously repeat himself,—become his own echo. We have not space to consider the next or logical element of style, important as it is, and pass, therefore, to the *choice of words*, of which it may be said that the simplest and most idiomatic are generally best. Joubert has well said that it is by means of familiar words that style takes hold of the reader and gets possession of him. "They beget confidence in the man who uses them because they show that the author has long made the thought or the feeling expressed his mental food; that he has so assimilated and familiarized them, that the most common expressions suffice him in order to express ideas which have become every day ideas to him by the length of time they have been in his mind." What is the secret of Spurgeon's power? Is it not that he uses the plain, nervous, sinewy Saxon; the vocabulary, not of books, but of the fireside and the market-place,—not of the university, but of the universe,? "The devil," he once said, "does not care for your dialectics and eclectic homilectics, or German objectives, and subjectives; but

pelt him with Anglo-Saxon in the name of God, and he will shift his quarters." In France the least lettered people make use of the same words as the greatest writers. Malherbe said that he took his words from the porters of the grain market. Stendhal had such a horror of emphasis that, before setting himself to write, he read a page of the civil code. One of the chief faults of Gladstone as a writer, is a kind of "dim magnificence" of style; he has a vast command of language which is grave and majestic, but of vague and uncertain meaning. What is meant by simplicity of style? Does it exclude beauty or tasteful ornamentation? Is the best style a colorless medium, which, like good glass, only lets the thought be distinctly seen, or may it, like a painted window which tinges the light with a hundred hues, afford a pleasure apart from the ideas it conveys? "He was so well dressed," said a person to Beau Brummell, "that everybody turned to look at him." "Then," said Brummell, "he was not well dressed." So of the garb of thought, it is said by some persons that it is most perfect when it attracts no attention to itself, and we see only the ideas which it habilitates. What is the distinctive excellence of Scott? Is it not that we rise from his works with a most vivid idea of what is related, and yet are unable to quote a single phrase in the entire narration? Well-dressed men and women are not those whose minds are absorbed in the art of dressing, but those who give simply the general impression that they are well-dressed, and nothing more. We do not look to tailors, milliners, and mantua-makers, for the best models of costume. That this is true of a large class of writings,—those which simply convey information, or seek or explain rather than to suggest or symbolize truth, and depict it in attractive forms,—all persons will admit; but that it is true of other kinds of composition,—those which are generic to poetry, and address themselves to the imagination, and through the imagination to the reason,—we are far from believing.

There are many literary compositions which, if summoned to give an account of themselves, to explain their *raison d'être* upon any utilitarian principles, would be sorely puzzled. It is something above all practical use, like the song of the lark, the colors of the rainbow, the butterfly's painted wing, or the burning breast of the robin. Of all such writings style is the very essence. Scientific books may do without this charm, but these must please or go to the trunk-maker's. In a dwelling-house or a shop we are content with plain geometrical lines and rectangular proportions. But, to use the illustration of another, when the painter puts on his canvas an old legendary castle,—some illustration of a scene which heroes have trodden or poets have sung,—we not only pardon, but expect a different treatment. Then we are delighted, if the moss and the ivy creep up the sides of the time-stained structure,—if the thunder-cloud rests upon the ruined battlements, and the moonlight streams through the clefts of the crumbling walls, and we catch sight of smooth lawns and nooks of bright garden, and the gleam of a distant river, down which the eye loses itself in woods. We cannot agree, therefore, with those who make it a canon of style that, in writing, one's only aim should be to express his ideas as simply as possible. He should also try to express them as vividly and as elegantly as possible. Simplicity is no more inconsistent with elegance than is ornament with strength. The Damascus blade cuts none the less keenly because it is polished, nor is a column less strong when its sides are fluted and its capital carved. The plumage that makes the beauty of the eagle supports it in its flight. The " Provincial Letters" and the writings of Courier are examples of perfect simplicity and of perfect style. If a writer has sufficient wealth of imagination to justify an exhibition of his riches, we need not fear that the ground work of good sense will be the slighter for the delicate arabesques and exquisite traceries with which he beautifies his beautiful products. On the contrary, as

Bulwer has said, "the elegance of the ornament not unfrequently attests the stoutness of the fabric. Only into the most durable tissues did the Genoese embroiderers weave their delicate tissues of gold; only on their hardest steel did the smiths of Milan damaskeen the gracious phantasies which still keep their armor among the heirlooms of royal halls.

To say, as some do, that the all-sufficing aim of writing is to make one's self understood with the smallest expenditure of words, is to adopt a Board of Trade or Corn Exchange standard. There are themes which require that we should draw upon the prismatic powers of language and evoke its hidden melodies. Words can yield a music as thrilling as the strings of any instrument; they are susceptible of colors more gorgeous than the hues of sunset; they are freighted with associations of feeling which have gathered about them during hundreds of years; and, therefore, to use them for the conveyance of ideas only as one conveys goods in a waggon, is not enough. Such a rule, if adopted, would reduce all our literature to the dull level of a Traveler's Guide,—to the vocabulary of a courier, and the eloquence of an almanac. Arrangement and repetition, harmony and illustration,—every grace and every charm,—all that makes "L'Allegro" and the "Castle of Indolence," "The Stones of Venice" and "The Marble Faun," what they are,—would be wanting. The cup you drink from, the dagger-hilt you handle, are not more useful though they be chased by Benvenuto Cellini; but was Cellini's labor useless? The truth is, however, that these devices and beauties of style, which are supposed to be separable from the thought, are not mere distinct decorations, but a part of its vivid presentation. Even in reading purely useful works, who has not a hundred times lamented their lack of style? Who ever read Grote's Greece without wishing that its author had known something of the cadence of a period, or Butler's Analogy without wishing its sentences were less involved and el-

liptical? Who can doubt that Locke's meaning is often made needlessly difficult by the ruggedness of his style, and that many of the wrong inferences drawn since his death from his system, and which would have shocked him had they been published in his lifetime, were due to that lack of verbal precision which the culture of euphony insures? We cannot sympathize, therefore, with the feeling of the poet Rogers, whom a single superfluous word, like the crumpled rose-leaf on the couch of the princess, made restless and captious. It was one of his peculiar fancies that the best writers might be improved by condensation. In vain did one warn him that to strip Jeremy Taylor or Burke of their so-called redundancies overlaying the sense, was like stripping a tree of its blossoms and foliage in order to bring out the massive proportions of its trunk. "There," he exclaimed one evening, after condensing one of Burke's noblest passages (in which every word has its appointed task), "there, concentrated as it now is, it would blow up a cathedral!"

We are aware that there are persons who have no appreciation of the graces of literary composition. They would have every sentence trained down to its fighting weight; not a particle of adipose tissue, but all sinew only, tense, close-knit,—for use and not for beauty. So there are persons who cannot feel the difference between a sonata of Beethoven and the Battle-Cry of Freedom, between a gravestone-cutter's cherub and the masterpieces of Raphael. But what does this prove? Only that they lack a sense, that is all. Napoleon belonged to this class. "What is called style, good or bad," said he to Madame de Rémusat, "does not affect me. I care only for the force of the thought." As well might he have said: "I care nothing for the arrangement of my soldiers in battle; I care only for the energy with which they fight." The fighting power of soldiers depends upon the tactical skill with which they are handled; and the force of ideas depends upon the way in which the verbal battalions that

represent them are marshalled on the battle-fields o thought.

The last element of style we have named is *complete ness in preparation and finish.* The most brilliant intel lect cannot do without an accumulated fund of facts an ideas. Even the poet, who seems neither to toil nor t spin,—whose creative exuberance appears to be innate,— can use only materials which have been stored in hi brain during years of thought, reading, and observation Before Johnson began the Rambler he had filled a com mon-place book with thoughts for his essays. Addiso amassed three folios of manuscript materials before he be gan the Spectator; and when a new publication was sug gested to him after the Guardian was finished, he replied "I must now take some time *pour me delasser*, and la in fuel for a future work." Frederick W. Robertso spent his leisure hours in the study of geology, chemistry and other sciences, to gain the materials of thought an illustration, and to give freshness to his sermons; an John Foster, for the same purpose, rambled many hour in the woods and fields. Scott did not hesitate to spen the leisure of a week in settling a point in history, or i gathering up the details of a bit of scenery which he wish ed to work into a poem or a novel. Again, the master of any important subject demands time. It cannot be ac complished by pressure or cramming, or by the most heroi extempore endeavor. The subject must be brooded ove from day to day, till by the half-conscious, half-uncon scious processes of thought, all that is unessential, incon gruous, or foreign, has been sloughed off; till all difficul ties, surveyed again and again from new angles of vision have been resolved, and that which was at first but a fain suggestion of truth, has surrounded itself, by a kind of elec tive affinity of ideas, with appropriate imagery and illus tration, and stands out at last, in bold relief and in ful proportions before the mental eye. Then how simple an lucid the statement, how luminous the exposition! Th

stream of thought runs so clear as almost to seem shallow; it glides so noiselessly that few suspect the depth, the volume, and the majestic sweep and force of its movement. It is because there is to-day so little hard thinking that we have so little good writing. The poverty of style is due largely to the very activity and restless impatience of modern thought. It is because thought and feeling do not have a brooding time,—because opinions and sentiments, hastily entertained, are not allowed to take root undisturbed and in silence, and to gain strength from mere length of tenure,—that so few writers master the secret of apt and vivid expression. A man of even the highest ability can no more say, "Go to, I will make a great essay, poem, or novel," than he can say. "Go to, I will make a religion."

Again, besides completeness in preparation, there must be also careful revision. The history of literature shows that with few exceptions the greatest writers have been the most severe and painstaking in revising and polishing their compositions. The capacity for minute refinement in detail and infinite loving labor has been justly pronounced an instinct of all truly artistic genius. Burke's manuscript was covered with interlineations and alterations; and not till he had examined half-a-dozen proofs of his Reflections did he allow it to go to press. When a lady asked Johnson, after he had elaborately revised his early papers in the Rambler, whether he could now improve any of them he replied: "Yes, madam, I could make even the best of them better still." Addison would stop the press to insert a preposition or conjunction. Sterne was incessantly employed for six months in perfecting one diminutive volume. Gray would spend a week upon a page. Robert Hall gave as a reason for writing so little, that he could so rarely realize even proximately his own ideal of a perfect style. Buffon made eleven draughts of his Epoques de la Nature before he sent it to the press; and he assured a friend that after

passing fifty years at his desk, he was still learning to write. Bossuet's manuscript was so bleared with interlineations as to be almost illegible. Cervantes took twelve years to write the second part of Don Quixote. It is true that Scott, who was untiring in gathering the materials of his novels, wrote in a whirlwind of inspiration, and never spent a moment with the file; but this, instead of justifying the neglect of revision, only explains the slovenliness of much of his composition. His writings abound in Scotticisms, errors in grammar, and other faults of style. When finishing the Fair Maid of Perth, he was troubled how to pack the catastrophe into the space allotted for it. "There is no help for it," he said; "I must make a *tour de force*, and annihilate both time and space." He too often made these *tours de force*. Beginning his novels with no definite plan, he let his plots construct themselves, the result of which was that his conclusions were often hurried, abrupt, and unsatisfactory.

But, it may be asked, is not the best writing, like the best painting, spontaneous, and does not the practiced become the ready hand? Did not Cervantes say that the jests of Sancho fell from him like drops of rain when he least thought of it, and do not the works of Raphael and Rubens seem to have cost them, as Hazlitt says, no more labor than if they "had drawn in their breath, and puffed it forth"! Are not many fine literary productions thrown off like the beautiful Dresden Madonna, which Raphael painted without any previous studies or drawings? We answer, yes; the best writing *is* spontaneous, but it is the spontaneousness of a second and disciplined nature. It is the experience of the veteran accomplishing with ease what seemed impossible to the raw recruit. It was because Gibbon wrote slowly "until he had got his one tune by heart," that he was able to send the last three volumes of the Decline and Fall in the first draught to press. It was after years of laborious self-training and experience, that Raphael was able to throw his whole

idea, in all its perfection and completeness, upon the canvas, without the necessity of realizing it by piecemeal in intermediate attempts. In all such cases, where miracles of swiftness seem to have been performed, the miracle will melt if we scrutinize it closely. We shall find that the picture has been painted, and the book written, with such ease, because years of study and practice have so lubricated the mental instruments, that, when the motive power is applied, they work, to a great extent, with the precision and regularity of a machine.

It is hardly necessary to add that one may dawdle too much over his compositions,—that he may use the file till it weakens them. There is a medium between the carelessness of Lope de Vega, who wrote a hundred plays in as many days, and the fastidiousness of the poet Dana, of whom Lowell says that he is so well aware how things *should* be done, that "his own works displease him before they are begun;" between the excessive caution of the ancient orator who was three olympiads in writing a single oration, and the reckless haste of the poet whose funeral pile was composed of his own productions. Perhaps the best description of the natural manner in which a great work comes into existence, is that quoted by Hammerton from Michelet. The French writer says of one of his own books, that "*it was produced by the heat of a gentle incubation.*" ("Elle s'est faite à la chaleur d'une douce incubation.")

That the moral character of a writer has much to do with the quality of his work can hardly be doubted. No man who stands habitually on a low moral and spiritual plane can produce a great work of art, whether in literature, sculpture, or painting. Noble thoughts can come only from a noble soul. It is said that in India a muslin is manufactured which is so fine that it has received the poetic name of "Woven Wind." When laid upon the grass to bleach, the dew makes it disappear. It used to be spun only by native women who had been trained to

the task from infancy; and so nice was the sense of touch required for the spinning of this yarn, that they were constantly waited upon by a retinue of servants, whose duty it was to relieve them of all menial offices that might endanger the fine tactual faculty which long practice and seclusion had bestowed on their delicate finger-tips. So those whose calling it is to spin the fine thread of thought, to be woven in the loom of the mind into the web and woof of a literary production, should jealously seclude themselves from all vulgar and debasing occupations,—all that can hurt the delicacy of their minds, or blunt those fine perceptions of truth and beauty which can be acquired by those only who have been trained to the quest of them from early youth.

We sometimes read of model styles; but there is no model style. As in painting, the manner which we admire in Albano and Vanderwerf would be misplaced in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or even the extended canvas of the Transfiguration, so it is only relatively, not absolutely, that any literary style can be said to be the best. Macaulay, who was certainly not lacking in literary taste, went so far as to say that the style of a magazine or review article, which should strike at the first reading, might be allowed sometimes to be even viciously florid. It is not by his own taste, he said, but by the taste of the fish, that the angler is determined in his choice of bait. That is the best style relatively to the individual, in which his particular cast of thought best utters itself, and in which the peculiarity of the man, that which differentiates him from other men, has the fullest and freest play. That is a good style generally, in which the words are vitalized by the thought, so that if you cut them they will bleed; in which the language is so fresh and forceful as to seem to have been just created; which is so elastic that it accommodates itself unconsciously to all the sinuosities of the thought, so that the thought and the expression are never for a moment separated, but are a simul-

taneous creation, coined at one stroke. The perfect writer, so far from having any one ideal style, will have a hundred styles, shifting and varying with every variation of his ideas and feelings. His instrument of expression will not be a pipe, but an organ with many banks of keys; capable of giving expression alike to thoughts that require only mellifluous cadences and gliding graces, and to those that demand diapason grandeur or trumpet stop,—to the complex harmonies of a Heroic Symphony, or the tumultuous movements of a Hailstone Chorus.

To define the charm of style,—to show why the same thought, when conveyed in one man's language, is cold and commonplace, and, when conveyed in another's is, as Starr King says, "a rifle-shot of a revelation," is impossible. It is easy to see how a magnetic presence, an eagle eye, a commanding attitude, a telling gesture, a siren voice, may give to truths when spoken a force or a charm which they lack in a book. "But how it is," as the same writer says, "that words locked up in forms, still and stiff in sentences, will contrive to tip a wink; how a proposition will insinuate more skepticism than it states; how a paragraph will drip with the honey of love; how a phrase will trail an infinite suggestion; how a page can be so serene or so gusty, so gorgeous or so pallid, so sultry or so cool, as to lap you in one intellectual climate or its opposite,—who has fathomed this wonder?" There is a mystery in style of which we cannot pluck out the heart. Like that of beauty, music, or a delicious odor, its spell is subtle and impalpable, and baffles all our attempts to explain it in words. Like that of fine manners, it is indefinable, yet all-subduing, and is the issue of all the mental and moral qualities, bearing the same relation to them that light bears to the sun, or perfume to the flower. Not even the writer himself can explain the secret of his art. In the works of all the great masters there are certain elements which are a mystery to themselves. In the frenzy of creation they instinctively infuse into their pro-

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ductions that of which they would be utterly puzzled to give an account. By a subtle, mysterious gift, an intense intuition, which pierces beneath all surface appearances and goes straight to the core of an object, they lay hold of the essential life, the inmost heart, of a scene, a person or a situation, and paint it to us in a few immortal words. A line, a phrase, a single burning term or irradiating word, flashes the scene, the character upon us, and it lives forever in the memory. It is so in sculpture, in painting, and even in the military art. When Napoleon was asked by a flatterer of his generalship how he won his military victories, he could only say that he was *fait comme ça.*

It was a saying of Shenstone, which almost everyone's experience will confirm, that the lines of poetry, the periods of prose, and even the texts of Scripture, most frequently recollected and quoted, are those which are felt to be pre-eminently musical. There are writers who charm us by their language, apart from the ideas it conveys. There is a kind of mysterious perfume about it, a delicious aroma, which we keenly enjoy, but for which we cannot account. Poetry often possesses a beauty wholly unconnected with its meaning. Who has not admired, independently of the sense, its "jewels, five words long, that on the stretched forefinger of all time, sparkle forever?" There are verses and snatches of song that continually haunt and twitter about the memory, as in summer the swallows haunt and twitter about the eaves of our dwelling. Coleridge, Shelley and Poe seem to have written some verse only to show how superior is the suggestion of sound to the expression of sense. How perfectly in Tennyson's Lotus-Eaters is the dreamy haze of the enchanted land he depicts reflected in the verse! How exquisitely do the refinement, the sentiment, the lazy skepticism of the age, find expression in his numbers. "No stanza," says a critic, "but is a symbol of satiety; no word but breathes itself out languidly as if utterly used up, and every line is glutted weariness." So with the

"nectared sweets" of Keat's verse; it is so dainty and luscious that "it makes the sense of satisfaction ache with the unreachable delicacy of its epithets." There are passages in Milton, Shakspeare, and Wordsworth, in which the mere cadence of the words is by itself delicious to a delicate ear, though we cannot tell how and why. We are conscious of a strange, dreamy sense of enjoyment such as one feels when listening in the night time to the pattering of rain upon the roof, or when lying upon the grass in a June evening, while a brook tinkles over stones among the sedges and trees. Sir Philip Sidney could not hear the old ballad of Chevy Chase without his blood being stirred as by the sound of a trumpet. Shelley took fright and fainted the first time he heard a certain magnificent and terrible passage in Christabel recited, and Scott tells us that the music of that poem was ever murmuring in his ears. Pope could never read certain words of Priam in Homer without bursting into tears; Boyle felt a tremor at the utterance of two verses of Lucan; and Spence declares that he never repeated certain lines of delicate modulation without a shiver in his blood not to be expressed. Who is not sensible of certain magical effects, altogether distinct from the thoughts, in some of Coleridge's and Shelley's verse; in the musical ripple of Irving's words; in the stealthy charm and subtle perfection of Thackeray's and Hawthorne's periods; in the mellow, autumnal hue which falls like the golden lights of harvest aslant the pages of Alexander Smith; in the grand harmonies of Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, and Ruskin; and in the orchestral swells and crashes of De Quincey? How perfectly the impetuosity of Napier's style corresponds to the military movements he describes! As we read his vivid narrative of the Peninsular battles, we seem, it has been said, to hear the tramp of the charging squadrons, the sharp rattle of the musquetry, and the booming thunder of the artillery. Words in a master's hands seem more than words; he seems to double or

quadruple their power by skill in using, giving them a force and significance which in the dictionary they never possessed. Yet, mighty as is the sorcery of these wizards of words, that of Shakspeare is still greater. The marvel of its diction is its immense suggestiveness,—the mysterious synthesis of sound and sense, of meaning and association, which characterizes his verse; a necromancy to which Emerson alludes in a passage which is itself an illustration, almost of the thing it describes. Speaking of the impossibility of acting or reciting Shakespeare's plays, he says: "The recitation begins, when lo! one golden word leaps out immortal from all this painted pedantry, and sweetly torments us with invitations to its own inaccessible homes."

Hardly less surprising than this suggestiveness of Shakspeare, is the variety of rhythm in his ten-syllable verse. We speak sometimes of Shakspeare's style; but we might as well speak of the style of Rumor with her hundred tongues. Shakspeare has a multiplicity of styles, varying with the ever-varying character of his themes. The Proteus of the dramatic act, he identifies himself with each of his characters in turn, passing from one to another like the same soul animating different bodies. Like a ventriloquist, he throws his voice into other men's larynxes, and makes every word appear to come from the person whose character he for the moment assumes. The movement and measure of Othello and the tempest, Macbeth and the Midsummer Night's Dream, Lear and Coriolanus, are almost as different from each other as the rhythm of them all from that of Beaumont and Fletcher; and yet in every case the music or melody is a subtle accompaniment to the sentiment that ensouls the play. Whoever would know the exhaustless riches of our many-tongued language, its capability of expressing the daintiest delicacies and subtlest refinements of thought, as well as the grandest emotions that can thrill the human brain, should give his days and nights to the study of the myriad-souled poet. It may be doubted whether there is any inflection

of harmony, any witchery of melody, from the warble of the flute and the low thrill of the flageolet to the trumpet-peal or the deep and dreadful sub-bass of the organ, which is not brought out in the familiar, or the passionate tones of this imperial master.

Style is often called the dress of thought, an objectionable term as it seems to imply that there is no vital connection between the two. Style is not a robe which may be put on or off at will; it is the incarnation of the thought. It is the coefficient without which the thought is incomplete. As words without ideas are soulless, so ideas without words are shadowless ghosts. Analyze any masterpiece of literature, the effect of which is not merely to convey information, or to establish truth by argument, and you will find that the things themselves are identified with the very phrases, words, and syllables, in which they are communicated. True as this is of prose, it is doubly true of poetry; it is a linked strain throughout. So ethereal and evanescent is the poetic spirit, so frail and fugitive is the vehicle in which it is conveyed, that, as a fine poet has said, though this inconvertible diction may be as durable as the firmament, and, like the firmament, may transmit the glories inlaid in it from generation to generation, yet, if you unsettle but a word in it, it breaks like a bubble, and the imprisoned spirit is gone. The spell of the great magicians of language depends upon the very terms they use, and to attempt conjuring with any other is to imitate the folly of Cassim in the Arabian Nights, who cried "Open Wheat," and "Open Barley" to the door which responded only to "Open Sesame."

Though style is not properly the dress of thought, and it degrades it to consider it as such, there is yet a striking analogy oftentimes between the costume of a period and its style. Look at the writers of the Elizbethan age; how stiff and elaborate, yet how picturesque is their literary garniture, like the garniture of their bodies! The peaked beard, the starched collar, the trunk-hose, and the

quilted doublet of Bacon, Sydney, and Spenser, are in singular keeping with the high sentence, the quaint fancies, and the rich decorations of their style. In Pope's day,—the day of powdered queues and purple-velvet doublets, of beaux with cocked hats and lace ruffles, and belles with patches on their cheeks,—men dressed their thoughts as finically as they did their bodies. As they carried snuff-boxes and wore rapiers, so they put titillating ingredients into their styles, and stabbed each other with epigrams. To-day dress,—at least, men's dress,—is neat, plain, close-fitting, business-like; with no waste of material, no ornament to please the eye, nor colors to attract attention; and such are the qualities of our literary composition. Our style is to that of the golden age of English literature what the frock-coat and the stove-pipe are to the doublet and the plumed hat.

In view of what we have said, even though very inadequately, of the value of style, let us ask if it does not merit the most careful and assiduous cultivation? The power of the author is mighty, but perishable. His words may be preserved, but the attitude and the look, the voice and the gesture, the fire and the imagination which gave a wizard's spell to his speech, are lost forever. The swords of the champions of eloquence are buried with them in the grave. Where is the electric oratory of Chatham, the dithyrambic melody of Grattan, the winged flame of Henry? Gone,—vanished forever, as completely as their forms from the banks of the Thames and the streets of Dublin and Richmond. Not so with those utterances which the printing-press has saved from destruction; framed in cunning and attractive forms by a master of composition, they may sway the world when the tongue is frozen and the hand is paralyzed. Committed to the frailest of substances, which a baby's hand can tear, a drop of water destroy, they repeat and perpetuate themselves through successive centuries, in defiance of all the agencies of loss and decay. It is an inestimable privilege

to be able to hold converse with the mighty dead through books,—to evoke the ghosts of Virgil and Dante, Bacon and Milton, Molière and Pascal, and listen to their winnowed wisdom, as they sit by our firesides and descant upon human and divine things. But there is a joy which as far transcends this as intellectual activity transcends passivity; it is the ecstasy of creation,—the joy of wreaking one's thought upon expression,—of giving utterance to the sentiment that has long haunted the brain, and which cries passionately for utterance. How dull and death-like is the life of the bookworm,—of the mind which has always absorbed knowledge, and never given it out! Who can wonder that so many cultivated men suffer from mental atrophy, ennui, and melancholy,—become shy, suspicious, morbidly self-reflecting and self-conscious,—when year after year they hoard information with miserly greed, and never vitalize it by imparting it to others? How many studious and thoughtful men, like the poet Gray, are tormented with an over-nice fastidiousness, which "freezes the genial current of the soul," and extinguishes all the healthy and buoyant activity of the intellect, making their lives as sluggish as "the dull weed that rots by Lethe's wharf," because they repress the natural instinct of creation, instead of giving to the world (pardon the phrase) their "level best" of expression! The mother of Goethe tells us that her son, whenever he had a grief, made a poem on it, and so got rid of it. How many persons who are dying of "the secret wounds which bleed beneath their cloaks" would find relief in giving voice to their pains in song! How many who make life a selfish paradise would experience a purer happiness if by apt tale, or play, or poem, they would communicate the joys of their deliciously overburdened souls to the souls of others!

The popular writer holds the same relation to the public which the merchant holds to the consumer. He is the mediator between the speculative thinker and the un-

cultured man. He is the middle man, who stands between the schools and the market-place, bringing the lettered and the unlettered together, and interpreting the one to the other. It is his function to work up the raw material, the rough ore of thought, into attractive forms, and by so doing to indoctrinate and impress the great mass of humanity. He thus contributes to that collision of mind with mind, that agitation and comparison of thought, which is the very life and soul of literature and history. To accomplish this mission he must be a master of language,—acquainted with the infinite beauty and the deepest, subtlest meanings of words; skilled in their finest sympathies; and able, not only to arrange them in logical and lucid forms, but to extract from them their utmost meaning, suggestiveness, and force. A man who has something to say, though he says it ill, may be read once. If he is read again, it will be due to some felicity of execution. No one re-reads a book unless drawn to it and lured on by the style, which magnetizes and entrances the reader like a siren, compelling him to go on from the beginning to the end. To be master of such a style,—vigorous, luminous, flexible, graceful and musical,—which responds to every mood of the writer as the strings or keys of the musical instrument respond to the touch of the master's fingers,—to have a prompt command of those subtle, penetrative words which touch the very quick of truth, as well as of those winged words and necromantic terms, freighted with suggestion and association, which are like pictures to the eye, and strains of music to the ear,—to be able to pour into language "such a charm, sweetness so penetrating, energy so puissant," that men will be compelled to listen, and listening to yield their wills,—this is to hold a wand more powerful than magician ever waved, a sceptre more potent than king ever wielded. Style thus viewed, takes rank with the fine arts, and, as such, is as worthy of study and admiration as those material forms which embody the conceptions of Angelo, Titian, and Raphael.

In conclusion, we are aware that in thus urging the claims of the art of expression, we have exposed ourselves to the jest of Diderot on Beccaria, that he had written a work on style in which there was no style; but one may see and feel the beautyof works of art which he can never execute; and we will willingly become a target for the critic's shafts, if we can but induce any of our readers, —especially our undergraduate readers,—to study the magnificent mystery of words. We press this matter the more urgently for two reasons: 1. Because, as Prof. Shedd says, the modern mind, especially "the American mind, is full of matter and overfull of force . . . The Goth needs to become an artist." 2. There is a tendency in some of our colleges to neglect rhetoric as a synonym for the shallow and the showy. The only style sanctioned by their professors is apparently the "colorless-correct," which Julius Hare called Scotch-English, and which Carlyle, himself a Scotchman, likened to power-loom weaving. Its great aim, apparently, is to avoid all impulse, brilliancy, and surprise; and its ideal is reached when a writer, as Coleridge said of Wordsworth, is "austerely accurate in the use of words." Even at our oldest college, where compositions were formerly required every fortnight for three years, only half-a-dozen essays are now required during the whole four years' course; and the department of "Rhetoric and Oratory," so long glorified by an Adams and a Channing, came so near to extinction a few years ago, that we are told it only got a reprieve at the very scaffold, at the intercession of some of the older graduates. Again, there are persons who, like Karl Hildebrand, affirm that nothing in one's native language, but grammar and spelling, can be taught; "I never heard," says he, "that Pascal and Bossuet, Swift and Addison, or Lessing and Goethe, passed through a course of stylistic instruction in French, English, or German; and yet they are supposed not to have written these languages so very badly. So, it might be replied, there have been men in every calling,—

painters, sculptors, musicians, architects,—who have mastered their art without technical instruction. But the example of these prodigies of genius proves nothing in regard to the average man. It is true that the highest secrets of a good style cannot be taught, but must be learned by each man for himself, pen in hand; that the knowledge and use of one's native language are grasped, not deliberately, but "by a thousand unconsciously receptive organs." But the same thing is true of music, painting, and all the other arts, in the acquisition of which, the student is advised to begin with a teacher. Let the the undergraduate, then, begin early to write,—to write while his faculties are plastic, lest, when he is called to posts of responsibility and honor, he have to take up the lament of Italy's statesman, Count Cavour. Bitterly did he lament that in his youthful days he had never been taught to speak and write,—"arts which," said he, "require a degree of nicety and adaptability in particular organs, which can only be acquired by practice in youth." To obtain such a mastery of language as we have described is the privilege of but a few; but all may make an approximation to it, and of all excellence, here as elsewhere, the first, second, and last secret is *labor*. Intercourse with men of culture, listening to the language of the common people, and the perusal of good authors, it has been truly said, are the basis of a good style; and the true means of perfecting it, are the habit of thinking clearly, conscientiousness in seeking the expression that exactly corresponds to one's thoughts, and the honesty not to write when one has nothing to say.* Above all should it be remembered, that the veins of golden thought do not lie on the surface of the mind; time and patience are required to sink the shafts, and bring out the glittering ore. The compositions whose subtle grace has a perennial charm, which we sip like old wine, phrase by phrase,

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* Karl Hildebrand.

and sentence by sentence, till their delicate aroma and exquisite flavor diffuse themselves through every cell of the brain, are wrought out not under "high pressure," but quietly, leisurely, in the dreamy and caressing atmosphere of fancy. They are the mellow vintage of a ripe and unforced imagination. The fitness of our language for such composition needs no proof, though, perhaps, in no other language has the average excellence of its prose-writing been so far below the excellence of its best specimens. The language which, at the very beginning of its full organization, could produce the linked sweetness of Sidney and the "mighty line" of Marlowe, the voluptuous beauty of Spenser and the oceanic melody of Shakpeare, and which, at a riper age, could show itself an adequate instrument for the organ-like harmonies of Milton and the matchless symphonies of Sir Thomas Browne; which could give full and fit expression to the fiery energy of Dryden and the epigrammatic point of Pope, to the forest-like gloom of Young and the passionate outpourings of Burns; which sustained and supported the tremulous elegance and husbanded strength of Campbell, the broad-winged sweep of Coleridge, the deep sentiment and all-embracing humanities of Wordsworth, and the gorgeous emblazonry of Moore; and which to-day, in the plenitude of its powers, responds to every call of Tennyson, Ruskin, Newman, and Froude,—is surely equal to the demands of any genius that may yet arise to tax its power. Spoken in the time of Elizabeth by a million fewer persons than to-day speak it in London alone, it now girdles the earth with its electric chain of communication, and voices the thoughts of a hundred million of souls. It has crossed the peaks of the Rocky Mountains, and has invaded South America and the Sandwich Islands; it is advancing with giant strides through Africa and New Zealand, and on the scorching plains of India; it is penetrating the wild wastes of Australia, making inroads into China and Japan, and bids fair to become the domin-

ant language of the civilized world. Let us jealously guard its purity, maintain its ancient idioms, and develop its inexhaustible resources, that it may be even more worthy than it now is to be the mother-tongue, not only of the two great brother nations whose precious legacy it is, but of the whole family of man.

The Duty of Praise.

"AMONG the minor duties of life," says Sydney Smith, "I hardly know any more important than that of not praising where praise is not due. Reputation is one of the prizes for which men contend; it is, as Mr. Burke calls it, 'the cheap defence and ornament of nations, and the nurse of manly exertions'; it produces more labor and more talent than twice the wealth of a country could ever rear up. It is the coin of genius, and it is the imperious duty of every man to bestow it with the most scrupulous justice and the wisest economy." Nothing can be truer than this, yet is it not equally true that among the minor duties of life is that of praising where praise *is* due? Is it not as important that we should admire what is admirable as that we should despise what is worthless? The world is full of men, women and children, who living unhappily and rusting in comparative activity, or doing but a tithe of the good they might do, for want of a little judicious praise. Having no faith in themselves, they need an assurance of their capabilities from others. The very fear of failure makes their failure sure, and they lose their strength when it is not recognised. To shy, sensitive natures, especially, praise is a vital necessity. They need to be encouraged and caressed as truly as others need to be lashed and spurred; and sincere commendation is to them at once a tonic and a cordial, cheering them with a flush of pleasant feeling, and bracing them for further good work.

Sainte Beuve tells us that when an idea occurred for the first time to Lammennais, he believed that the world

would hasten to ruin unless he instantly made it known to the world; so he at once set to work to communicate it. During all his processes and applications, all that he did and undid, the orchestra of pride was playing in a low tone, deep down and at a distance within himself, "I am the savior, I am the savior." It is a popular notion that such self-esteem is a common, if not a universal, weakness; we believe it is rare. We are confident that a large part of that conduct which so annoys us in our fellow sinners, and which we resist in society, and laugh at out of it, as vanity and egotism, is the very opposite, being only an uneasy or frantic attempt to win from others an assurance of what one himself sorely doubts. What a pity, then, that men in their various dealings with each other are so niggard of praise! Why do we so often wait till our loved ones are torn from us by death before we give full expression to our affection? Of what use to the faithful wife whom we lay in the grave, are the tears we shed over her, the endearing terms we lavish upon her memory, and the passionate praises of her virtues with which we vex the ears of friends? She whom we now so deplore, would have drunk such expressions of tenderness in her life-time with ineffable delight; but, alas! our lips were sealed, and now our words cannot reach her. There is hardly a man living who is not keenly susceptible to approbation in some form; and yet there is no instrument of power over the affections or the conduct of our fellow beings which we employ so grudgingly as that which is the most pleasing and the most efficacious of all. Who can estimate the amount of good that might be accomplished in our schools, in our families, and in all the relations of employer and employed, were we as quick to commend excellence as we are to growl and scold at its absence! Scolding begets fear, praise begets love: and "not only are human hearts more easily governed by love than by fear, but fear often leads less to the correction of faults and the struggle for merits than

toward the cunning concealment of the one and the sullen discouragement of the other."

But, says some one, is not praise sometimes dangerous? Yes, and so is blame; so are knives and pistols and locomotives; and so is everything useful; but would you banish the sunshine because it sometimes sets forests on fire? No doubt it is poison to a human soul to breathe the incense of praise habitually; and we may be sure that no man ever attains to complete self-knowledge until he has had an enemy. In the Roman Church no man is canonized until his claims have been formally investigated; and for this purpose a Devil's Advocate, so-called, is appointed. whose business it is to pick flaws in the life and character of the proposed saint, and to show that he is no better than other men. It is said that De Launoy, the famous doctor of the Sorbonne, applied himself to this work with such a will and such earnestness that he won the title of *Le Grand Dénicheur des Saints*, "The Great Dislodger of Saints." Bonaventura D'Argonne said of him: "He was an object of dread to heaven and to earth. He has dethroned more saints from paradise than ten popes have canonized. Everything in the martyrology stirred his bile. * * * The curate of St. Eustache, of Paris, said: 'When I meet the Doctor de Launoy I bow to him down to the very ground, and I speak to him only hat in hand, and with the deepest humility; so afraid am I of his depriving me of my St. Eustache, who hangs by a thread.'" It would be well for most persons to listen occasionally to a functionary of this kind, did not one's neighbors so often volunteer their services as to render his services unnecessary. But praise and overpraise are two different things; and while the latter, when it does not disgust, puffs up and corrupts its subject, the former, when justly bestowed, incites to new and earnest effort. It is not honest commendation that inflates, but that which we bestow insincerely, when we are angling for compliments, and expect to be repaid with compound in-

terest. It has been truly said that the delicacy of the sensitiveness to merited praise may be almost regarded as an exact measure of the delicacy of the civilization, and stands in the same relation to the narrow, blunt, embryonic sense of the savage as the skin of the race-horse to the hide of the rhinoceros. The civilized nature is sensitive all over. The whole surface of the epidermis, every little hair, is electrified by the mere presence in the air of praise and blame.

The writer we have quoted at the beginning of this article says of Sir James Mackintosh that "his chief foible was indiscriminate praise." Better this than indiscriminate blame. Vauvenargues, the French moralist, goes so far as to say that "it is a great sign of mediocrity always to praise moderately." Habitually to withhold commendation where it is deserved and needed,—"to damn with faint praise" where there is signal merit,—to be always afraid of committing one's self and of being taken in,—argues a narrow head and a cold heart. The spirit of cynicism, of depreciation; the mocking goblin that sits at the elbow of some men to scoff at others, to chill enthusiasm, to prick all the bubbles of the ideal with the needle-point, to tell eloquence that it is bombast, love that it is refined selfishness, and devotion that it is cant, is a spirit not of heaven or earth, but of hell. On the other hand, to be quick to recognise merit, even where least expected, and to commend it in unstinted terms, is sure proof of a large and magnanimous soul.

Moralists in all ages have denounced vanity, but we doubt whether it deserves all the hard names heaped upon it. A certain amount of self-esteem seems absolutely necessary to keep men alive and in heart. It is to a man what the oily secretion is to a bird, with which it sleeks and adjusts its ruffled plumage. It has been justly said that if a man could hear all that his fellows say of him,—that he is stupid, that he is hen-pecked, that he will be bankrupt in a week, that his brain is softening, that he

has said all his best things and keeps repeating himself,—and if he could believe that all these pleasant things are true, he would be in his grave before the month was out. There are some men who need praise as much as flowers need sunshine. You cannot get the best work out of them without it. It is vain to preach to them self-reliance; they need to be propped and buttressed by others' opinions,—to be braced by encouragement and sympathy. "Praise me, Mr. Pope," said Sir Godfrey Kneller to the poet of Twickenham, as the latter sat for his portrait; "you know I can't do as well as I should unless you praise me." Ridiculous as this request may seem, who doubts that the crooked little poet got a better portrait by complying with it? And when was praise more efficacious, when did it yield a richer harvest, than when bestowed on the sickly poet himself?

Bulwer, in his essay on "The Efficacy of Praise," in "Caxtoniana" observes that every actor knows how a cold house chills him, and how necessary to the full sustainment of a great part is the thunder of applause. He states that the elder Kean, when he was performing in some theatre in this country, came to the manager when the play was half over and said: "I can't go on the stage again, sir, if the pit keeps its hands in its pockets. *Such an audience would extinguish Ætna.*" Upon this the manager told the audience that Mr. Kean, not been accustomed to the severe intelligence of American citizens, mistook their silent attention for courteous disappointment, and that if they did not applaud Mr. Kean as he was accustomed to be applauded, they could not see Mr. Kean act as he was accustomed to act. Of course the audience took the hint; and as their fervor rose, so rose the genius of the actor, and their applause contributed to the triumphs it rewarded.

Adam Clarke tells us that when a boy he was regarded as exceedingly dull of intellect. One day his father said to a teacher who had called at his house: "That boy is very

slow at learning; I fear you will not be able to do much with him." "My heart sank," says Dr. Clarke. "I would have given the world to have been as some of the boys around me. The man spoke with kindness, gave me some directions, and laying his hand upon my head, observed: 'This lad will make a good scholar yet.' I felt his kindness; it raised my spirit; the possibility of being able to learn was in this moment, and for the first time, impressed upon my mind; a ray of hope sprang up within me; in that hope I lived and labored; it seemed to create power; my lessons were all committed to memory with ease, and I could have doubled the effort had it been required." From that moment Adam never looked back, and never loitered. The boy who had shown so little love for his books became passionately fond of them; he bounded over the fields of learning with the speed of a race-horse, and never abated his activity till the day of his death.

Periodical Literature.

MR. LECKY, in his European Morals, calls attention to a "momentous intellectual revolution" which is taking place in England, and, he might have added, in this country. He points out that the work of instructing the public, which used to belong to book-makers, has been almost wholly handed over to the journalists who give us the results of their thinking in the daily and weekly press. Even touching abstruse subjects, such as philosophical and ethical theories, he maintains that the weekly English papers exercise a greater influence than any other productions of the day in "forming the ways of thinking of ordinary educated Englishmen." These statements may startle the thoughtful reader, and strike him, at first, as overcharged; but who that considers the number, variety, and ever-increasing ability of these periodicals, can doubt it? The public journal, at once the echo and the prompter of the public mind, is constantly enlarging its power and widening its scope. As a means of swaying the minds of men, which is the essence of power; as an instrument for elevating society, which is the object of goodness; in the directness, strength, and persistence of its influence, it has no equal among all the agencies of human utterance. Not only is it becoming the common people's encyclopædia,—its school, lyceum, and college,—but the educated classes are looking to it more and more as their oracle. Is this a fact to be deprecated, or shall we rejoice at a revolution which it is evidently not in our power to stop?

There is a class of persons who talk in a very melancholy strain about the "light literature" with which they

say we are deluged in these days. Some of them have even gone so far as to doubt whether newspapers are not, in one way, nuisances, and whether the habit of reading them daily at all hours is not a kind of intellectual dram-drinking, ultimately very injurious to intellectual digestion. These persons hardly know which to regard as the more deplorable, that the American people should read so many newspapers and magazines, or that scholars should waste so much of their time in contributing to these ephemeral publications. Under their baleful influence we are losing, it is feared, all terseness, elegance, and idiomatic purity of style, and all capacity for serious thought. Skimming the surface of things, acquiring no solid, thorough information, we shall be speedily, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, like the inhabitants of a besieged town,—we shall have "a mouthful of every kind of knowledge, and a bellyful of none." But what do these croakers mean by *light* literature? Is not the word purely relative? May not reading which is light as chaff to one man be as weighty as grain to another? The question with the great majority of men is not whether they shall read newspapers and magazines, or solid, thoughtful books, but whether they shall read the former or nothing. Henry of Navarre longed for the time when every Frenchman should have a hen in his pot. That he deemed a better sign of a people's prosperity than occasional big feasts in the castles of the great. The newspapers and magazines bring literature into every home, just as an aqueduct and pipe bring the water of Lake Michigan into the homes of the citizens of Chicago. It is quite true that the water tastes occasionally of iron, and wears a rusty stain,—quite true that a purer draught may be found at some lake in the shadow of the hills; but the water is flowing in every house, which is the great desideratum; and, moreover, it is often as pure in the basin of the citizen as beneath the trembling sedges which the wild duck loves.

It was with the greatest reluctance, and only because

they had been republished in America, and thence smuggled into England, that Macaulay consented to the republication of his "ephemeral" essays in book-form by the Longmans; yet upward of a hundred and twenty thousand copies had been sold five or six years ago, by a single publisher, in Great Britain alone. Can any one doubt that the reading world has been as much profited by his contributions to the Edinburgh Review as by his more ambitious history?

The truth is, the "light reading" so much stigmatized is a necessary prerequisite to a taste for something more substantial. As a horse cannot live upon oats without hay, so the popular mind cannot digest its nutriment if it is too concentrated. There must be bulk as well as nutriment. Destroy our periodicals, and who believes that Bacon and Milton would have one reader a century hence where they now have a hundred? To thousands and tens of thousands the newspaper is an academy, in which they are prepared to profit by the instruction they will afterward get in the university of which Bacon, Newton, Locke, Mill,—all the world's great thinkers,—are professors.

We deny, however, the propriety of the term "light" when applied in so sweeping a manner to the newspaper literature of the day. Is thought more weighty because it is printed in a book and bound in cloth or leather, instead of in a daily or weekly journal? Those who call our newspaper literature "light" forget the enormous stride which journalism has made within the last forty years. Our leading newspapers are no longer filled with news exclusively,—with raw-head and bloody-bones stories, or with gossip and twaddling criticism,—but with ably-written editorials and contributions, containing the results of much thought and research, touching the gravest questions of the day, political, moral, social, literary, and scientific. Often, too, our great journals contain eloquent and instructive sermons, into which leading Ameri-

can divines have put their best thought; often they contain elaborate and scholarly articles from the reviews, and choice extracts,—the *crême de la crême*, the wheat thrice winnowed,—of the ablest works of the day on art, literature, theology, finance and science in all its forms; and the profoundest thinkers and the ripest scholars often make the daily and the weekly press the vehicle of instruction to the world. Many of the best books now published are reprints of articles contributed by the Spencers, Martineaus, Agassizes, Herschels, Huxleys, Hawthornes, Arnolds, Carlyles, Renans, Sainte-Beuves, and hundreds of other writers equally brilliant, learned, or profound, to the newspapers, magazines, and quarterlies of the day. The newspaper is, in fact, the people's book,—the only book which thousands feel able or willing to buy, or think they have time to read; and if by buying it they can be cheated into devouring entire books in slices, or even the juicy and most nutritious portions only, shall we not rejoice? Is it necessary, in order that a man may be nourished and strengthened by roast-beef, that he should eat from a whole joint?

Shall we be told for the thousandth time that "a little learning is a dangerous thing,"—that the smattering of knowledge one gets of difficult and complex subjects from newspapers is worse than ignorance? Pray tell us, Mr. Wise Man, how many persons there are in the community even among the educated, who have a *really*,—not a *relatively*,—profound knowledge of any subject? How many philosophers, who have exhausted all that is to be learned in *any* department of knowledge? Again, if a little knowledge is to be shunned as dangerous, how is one ever to acquire a great deal? It seems to us that if a little knowledge is dangerous, no knowledge is more dangerous still. A little chemistry will teach a farmer whether his soil needs animal or mineral dressing. A little geology will keep a man from digging hundreds of feet for coal, in formations where it cannot be found. A little minera-

logy will prevent him from mistaking mica for gold. A little knowledge of poisons and their antidotes may save his life. It is well enough to know the multiplication-table, though you should never scale the dizzy heights of mathematics, where LaPlace and Newton dwell like stars apart.

Wendell Phillips once said that there are two kinds of education; that there is the education of Harvard and Yale, and there is the education of the New York Tribune and the New York Post; and the latter kind is quite as valuable as the former. The rudimental discipline of school is, of course, indispensable, and the broader culture and severer training of the college are of high advantage to the young; but who can doubt that the stimulus furnished to their minds by the newspaper,—its pungent, suggestive paragraphs,—its fiery or thoughtful leaders,—the libraries of information it contains,—its faithful pictures of the great world, "its fluctuations and its vast concerns,"—its prompt sympathy with the ideas and sentiments of to-day,—all combine to render it as an educator more effective and more enduring in its effects, for good or ill, than any other human agency? To live in a village was once to be shut up and contracted; but now a man may be a hermit, and yet a cosmopolite. For the newspaper is a telescope, by which he brings near the most distant things; a microscope, by which he leisurely examines the most minute; an ear-trumpet, by which he collects and brings within his hearing all that is done and said all over the earth; a museum, full of curiosities; a library, containing the quintessence of many books; a picture gallery full of living scenes from real life, drawn not on canvas, but on paper with printer's ink.

It is not strange, perhaps, that the cultivated man, who sees so many sterling books reposing neglected on his shelves, because he cannot find time to read them, should sometimes resolve with Thoreau to throw aside the Times and to read the Eternities. But what would be the result,

if his resolution were put in force? Let the experiment of Auguste Comte answer. We are told that at one time this great thinker abstained from newspapers as a teetotaller abstains from spirituous liquors. By so doing he preserved intact his power of abstraction,—of dealing with intellectual conceptions as with material things,—which newspaper reading might have impaired; but, by thus isolating himself from the interests and ways of thinking of ordinary men, he arrived at "a peculiar kind of intellectual decadence," from which a thoughtful writer thinks the rough common sense of the newspapers would have preserved him.* It looks like a very wise plan to transfer the three hundred hours a year spent over the newspaper to the English classics. But would the gain balance the loss? It was very well for an Englishman of Queen Anne's time to read Addison and Steele's Spectator, but the Englishman of to-day, who would keep abreast with the times in which he lives, must read the Spectators, Timeses, and Saturday Reviews of the present hour. Newspapers are, in truth, contemporary history; not always accurate, but none the less history. They are the glass and mirror of the age. As the author of "The Intellectual Life" observes: "The mind is like a merchant's ledger;—it requires to be continually posted up to the latest date. Even the last telegram may have upset some venerable theory that has been received as infallible for ages."

As to the regret that scholars and scientists "waste their time" in contributing to periodicals, we do not see "the waste." When persons cry out against such men frittering away their brains in the production of a literature which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the waste-paper basket, they forget the facts we have just stated, and, above all, that, as periodical literature is that which reaches the greatest number of minds, its worth is exactly

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* P. G. Hammerton, in "The Intellectual Life."

proportioned to the number of able and well-instructed men who contribute to produce it. Journalism, which reaches the million, is the very last kind of literary production that should be abandoned to feeble, shallow thinkers and vulgar writers who lack capacity for more enduring work. It should be the work of minds of the largest size and of "the divinest mettle." Who can estimate the good to the community when the leading thinkers, instead of lecturing a dozen times a year to audiences of five hundred, or publishing books to be read by a few thousands, pour out their treasures through the daily or weekly press to a hundred thousand readers? Why should the feeblest men control the tremendous power of the press? Why should the elephant be harnessed to the go-cart, and the mouse to the load of hay?

Those persons who complain when a savant or scholar, instead of concentrating his energies upon some single task, and devoting a life-time to it, writes upon various topics for the press, assume that the former course would be better for himself and the world. They forget that, instead of having one pet notion which he would like to ventilate, he may have a dozen, or a hundred,—perhaps a new one daily or weekly. Perhaps not one of these notions is worth expanding into a book, yet they may all be admirable themes for a newspaper article. Journalism enables a writer to say just what the subject exacts and no more, to say it when the inspiration moves him, and to say it to just those persons to whom he wants to say it. Again, the persons who would have a man write books instead of newspaper articles take for granted that a writer's largest work,—that which has cost him the longest and severest toil,—is necessarily the best. Literary history teems with instances to the contrary. Leisure and years of devotion to a task have often resulted in tediousness. The Fairy Queen and Hudibras would have far more readers if they were each squeezed into a single book. Who reads Wordsworth's Excursion, or Landor's

Gebir? How few Americans have toiled through the long poems of Dryden; yet what school-boy is not familiar with the Ode on St. Cecilia's day? Of Voltaire's hundred volumes, how many are known to-day even by their titles? Voluminous, long-winded authors seldom float securely down the stream of time. Posterity examines unwieldy luggage with a severe and jealous eye, and seems glad of an excuse to toss it into the waves of Lethe. There may be more wealth in a lady's jewel-box than in a merchant's warehouse, and Gray's Elegy, Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, and Milton's L'Allegro and Il Penseroso will be read long after their more elaborate poems are forgotten. There can be no greater mistake than to estimate the value of literary productions by their size. A terse newspaper paragraph is often quoted from Eastport to San Francisco and stirs the hearts of millions. In a few piquant sentences, a writer may hit off a folly of the day, satirize a social evil, rebuke a vice, or put into a portable form an argument for or against a political or economic policy. In that brief space may be packed a tremendous power of thought and expression, as in a drop of water there is condensed electricity enough to kill an elephant. Above all, we are not to infer that a newspaper article is not weighty or instructive because it is lively and sparkling in style. Lead is not priceless because it is weighty, nor is a bar of gold valueless because it glitters. The public wants a light literature; but it requires a lightness with a value in it, like that of the paper-boat which Shelley launched upon the Serpentine, which was made of a fifty-pound Bank of England bill.

Finally, it should never be forgotten by those who groan over the "waste" of talent in periodicals that many writers are born for just that kind of work. In literature, as in war, there are many men more brilliant than profound; who have more *élan* than persistence; who gain their victories, like the Zouaves, by a rapid dash; who, as Byron said of himself, are like the tiger, which,

if it does not seize its prey at the first bound, goes back grumbling to its cave. All these do their best in periodicals. Like the orator, whose imagination is kindled by his audience, like the actor who is excited by the crowded house, they need the immediate presence of the reader. If such persons have minds full of thought and information on an immense variety of topics, and have something new and instructive to communicate on each of them, why should they be condemned to write a big treatise or an epic poem,—especially when they have no inspiration to do so, and the task of a single work will preclude them from uttering more than a fraction of what is in them, and of what is the natural outcome of their genius? There is more sentimentality than good sense in the regrets of those who sigh at the "fragmentary" nature of a Mackintosh's or a Jeffrey's productions, because they have chosen to instruct and enlighten the public through the pages of reviews and magazines rather than through those of a *magnum opus*. If a landscape gardener chooses to give us for our refreshment a grove of shady elms, we will not grumble, but rejoice that he did not give us, instead, a solitary giant oak. If an architect plants in a city a multitude of churches, each of which is a model of convenience and an architectural gem, we will not demand of him why he did not, with a keener eye to his fame, build a monument to his genius in a single towering cathedral. No one is so foolish as to depreciate the odes of Horace because of their brevity, or to lament that Demosthenes spoke on the topics of the hour, instead of writing a history like that of Thucydides.

The interests of society, it must be remembered, are best subserved by the division of labor. To dig the ore of knowledge from the mine, and to strike the coin at the mint, are wholly different operations, and he who does the one is seldom qualified for the other. If Newton was properly employed in elaborating the "Principia," Addison was just as properly employed in writing the Specta-

tor. Instead, therefore, of regretting, we should exult that so many able and accomplished men have come down from their stilts, popularized science and philosophy, and redeemed journalism from its degradation. instead of benefiting the few by writing big books. By so doing, they are probably doing more, as Jeffrey truly says, to direct and accelerate the rectification of public opinion upon all practical questions than by any other use they could possibly make of their faculties. "Their names, indeed, may not go down to posterity in connection with any work of celebrity, and the greater part even of their contemporaries may be ignorant of the very existence of their benefactor. But the benefits conferred would not be less real, nor the conferring of them less delightful, nor the gratitude of the judicious less ardent and sincere."

"The Blues" and Their Remedy.

"——human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges and their schools,
That when nae real ill perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them ;
An' aye the less they have to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them." BURNS.

AMONG the various ills that flesh is heir to, one of the direst is a predisposition to melancholy. What are the causes of this tendency in certain men and women is often a puzzling question to decide; nor has old Burton, with all his acuteness and prodigality of learning, cleared up the mysteries of the subject. Neither body nor mind, probably, is exclusively concerned in the matter, but each acts and reacts upon the other. In a large number of cases a tendency to low spirits is hereditary, as in the instance of Dr. Johnson, whose father suffered at times from a mental gloom that bordered on insanity. Though in after-life Johnson described himself and Shenstone at Pembroke College as "a nest of singing birds," it is yet well known that in one of his college vacations he was so overcome with constant irritation, fretfulness, and despair, that life became almost insupportable. Gaining strength by indulgence, his hypochondria increased in intensity, till at last he was so languid at times that "he could not distinguish the hour upon the town clock." His friend Shenstone, too, whether from constitutional or other causes, was also, in after-life, a prey to melancholy. Gray said that he passed his days in hopping round the Leasowes, and was miserable except in the company of visitors. When they were gone,

he had nothing to do but "to go to sleep for the winter." He read little, and while his mental gloom increased daily, philosophy furnished him with no stone to fling at the giant. The ennui from which he suffered he has well described in the following lines:

> "Tedious again to curse the drizzly day,
> Again to trace the wintry tract of snow;
> Or, sooth'd by vernal airs, again survey
> The self-same hawthorns bud and cowslips blow."

The poet Gray, though he laughed at the sorrows of Shenstone, was equally unhappy in the old courts of the Cambridge Pembroke; but his melancholy "wears a serener aspect, and the shadows that seem to hang about him only lend a more mellow and solemn beauty to his character."

Ruskin declares that cheerfulness is just as natural to the heart of man in strong health as color to his cheek; and "wherever there is habitual gloom, there must be either bad air, unwholesome food, improperly severe labor, or erring habits of life." True as this is generally, it is not so always; there is abundant evidence to show that a melancholy temperament and a prevailing gloomy mood may exist in company with perfect health. A large preponderance of sensibility will induce inequality of moods,—periods of excessive gayety alternating with periods of excessive melancholy. As genius implies an excess of nervous force, and hence of sensibility, Aristotle was right in saying that all men of genius are melancholy. The biographies of eminent men show that great powers of mind are not friendly to cheerfulness. Poets, philosophers, deep-thinkers, all by turns have a touch of Bunyan's experience, "as if the sun that shineth in the heavens did grudge to give light, and as if the stones in the streets and the tiles upon the houses did bend themselves against them,"—the cause being a lack of mental

balance, for wherever there is excess, there must also be defect. It is a well-known fact that great wits have usually been melancholy. Though the liveliest of companions, they have been habitually hipped in their solitary hours. Grimaldi was pursued by a devouring melancholy whenever he was off the stage, and Curran, who set the tables in a roar by his merry talk, was so sad that he declared he never went to bed without wishing that he might not rise again. Sydney Smith was an exception to the rule. He was positively mad with spirits,—their flow was perennial, and he bubbled over with jokes and merriment alike in winter and summer, on sunny days and cloudy. Sterne had an equally sunny temperament. Hair-brained, light-hearted, and sanguine,—pleased with himself, his whims, follies, and foibles,—he treated misfortune as a passing guest, and even extracted amusement from it while it stayed. He tells us that it was by mirth that he fenced against his physical infirmities, persuaded that every time a man laughed he added something to his fragment of life; and so at Paris he laughed till he cried, and believed that his lungs had been improved by the process as much as by the change of air. Even after a fever which nearly cut short his life-long peal of laughter,—"a scuffle with death, in which he suffered terribly,"—he was not depressed; but, while barely out of danger, and still weak and prostrate, he took up his pen to announce the merry continuation of his Tristam Shandy, which had been "as good as a bishopric to him," and so continued to laugh on till pleurisy ended his days.

As individuals are constitutionally predisposed to melancholy, so there is a national temperament that predisposes men to gloomy views of life. The Englishman, saturated with the fogs of his island, is notoriously less cheerful than the inhabitant of sunny France. It is said that when the former meets with reverses, his resources are his razor and his pistol; a Frenchman, on the other hand, turns to that all-consoling word, "*n'importe*," and,

having shrugged his shoulders, is instantly transformed into a useful workman. Many years ago Monsieur Zephyre, a first-rate opera dancer, sunk in Waterloo Bridge, London, £5,000, which he had accumulated by laborious instructions in his profession. The shares which he had bought at £100 soon fell to £15. But did *le pauvre Zephyre* think it incumbent on him to leap into the Thames to drown his cares? No; he used to parade the arches of that noble structure daily, and, whenever he could get a soul to listen to him, would tell his story, winding it up with the oft-repeated clause: "Though the speculation was a bad one, yet it must be confessed that the bridge is perfect."

There is no doubt that climate, and even the scenery amid which one lives, have much to do with depression of the spirits, especially in the case of certain finely strung and sensitive natures. It has been truly said that every locality is like a dyer's vat, and that the residents take its color, or some other color, from it, just as the clothes do that the dyer steeps in stain. The dreadful midland monotony of Warwickshire,—its endless succession of inclosed fields and hedgerow trees,—became at last so repulsive to Dr. Arnold, that he panted for wilder scenery as the hart pants for the water-brooks. Robert Hall tells us that the country about Cambridge wrought woefully even on his powerful mind; it depressed him to the level of its own flatness. As the landscape there has no striking or even pleasing features, and is often overhung with fogs or rendered dreary by rains, one feels there, says a Fellow of one of the Colleges, "like a turkey upon a plain; one can't rise above it; he is powerless to take wing." Does not this explain the doleful dumps and the suicidal feelings men so often have on the dead levels of the West,—especially in Chicago, where the people live on the meeting edges of two prairies, one of land, and the other of water?

Whatever the causes of "the blues," there is no doubt that, with a few exceptions, all men have their splenetic

hours. There are times when, if asked how we do, we reply with Neal's Mr. Trepid: "A great deal worse than I was, thank'e; 'most dead, I'm obliged to you,—I'm always worse than I was, and I don't think I was ever any better. I'm going off some of these days, right after my grandfather, dying of nothing in particular, but of everything in general. That's what finishes our folks." There are periods when we are dissatisfied with ourselves and with everything about us, without being able to give a substantial reason for being so,—when we can say with Wordsworth:

> "My apprehensions come in crowds;
> I dread the rustling of the grass;
> The very shadows of the clouds
> Have power to shake me as I pass;
> I question things, and do not find
> One that answers to my mind,
> And all the world appears unkind"

It is a mortifying reflection that at such times the powers of reason should avail less than those of matter, and that a page of Seneca cannot raise the spirits when a glass of Madeira will. But nothing is more certain than the utter worthlessness of most of the advice given to us at such times.

> "Consolatories writ with studied argument
> Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,"

do not produce the patience they extol, because mental states that are not caused by reasoning cannot by reasoning be dispelled. Something better than patience is needed; bodily activity must be roused, high aspirations must be awakened, and the resiliency of the heart must be called upon rather than its passive strength.

Generally speaking, if you are troubled with "the blues," and cannot tell why, you may be certain that it springs from physical weakness. The best course, then, is to try to strengthen yourself,—of course, by vigorous

muscular exercise. Instead of lying on a sofa, and courting painful ideas, if you are a despairing lover, a hypochondriac, or a valetudinarian, you should be up and stirring yourself. The blood of a melancholy man is thick and slow, creeping sluggishly through his veins, like muddy waters in a canal; the blood of your merry, chirping philospher is clear and quick, brisk as newly broached champagne. Try, therefore, to set your blood in motion. To effect this, don't go to guzzling down brandy-smashes, gin-cocktails, or any of the other juggling compounds in which alcohol is disguised; for every artificial stimulant will drag you down two degrees for every one it lifts you up. The devil always beats us at barter. Try, rather, what a smart walk will do for you; set your pegs in motion on rough, rocky ground, or hurry them up a steep, cragged hill; build stone wall; swing an axe over a pile of hickory or rock-maple; turn a grindstone; dig ditches; practise "ground and lofty tumbling"; pour water into sieves with the Danaides, or, with Sisyphus, "up the high hill heave a huge round stone"; in short, do anything that will start the perspiration, and you will soon cease to have your brains lined with black, as Burton expresses it, or to rise in the morning as Cowper did, "like an infernal frog out of Acheron, covered with the ooze and mud of melancholy." When Dr. Johnson suffered from mental gloom, he saw plainly that, instead of yielding, as so many do, to the indolence which naturally creeps over a morbid temperament, he must overcome his enemy by persistent physical exercise. He sought the society of the cheerful and the gay; he walked much in the open air, and strengthened his nervous systom by daily friction, a spare diet, and frequent change of occupation; he engaged, too, in merry and mirth-provoking conversation, even "when his heart was ready to burst," as he said, "with gloomy emotions." He thus subdued the constitutional melancholy, which was never wholly eradicated; and had he overcome his habit of keeping late hours, and drinking

strong tea from a kettle that was "never dry," he might have mitigated still more the disease which preyed upon him. It is told of De Quincey, that, during his later years, he fancied that he had a living hippopotamus, or some such horrid creature, in his stomach, and the only remedy he found for this and similar effects of opium, was to walk with all his might for ten miles a day, or, if it rained, to lug a pile of stones from one point to another.

An old gentleman of our acquaintance, who is the hero of a hundred fights with "the blues," tells us that he early learned a secret which has been of infinite value to him, and that is, that they never ride on horseback. Equally true is it that they never take a smart walk, never visit a gymnasium and lift a thousand pounds,—never play at cricket or football,—never go skating or hunting,—never split their sides over the pages of Cervantes, Molière, or Tom Hood. They may saunter along with you beneath the solemn elms or weeping willows, or through the quiet walks of the graveyard; they will bend with you over the pages of Byron, Tennyson, or Hawthorne, they will devour greedily the Night Thoughts of Young, and be spell-bound by the dramas of Webster and Ford; they will sit with you by twilight in a lonely, retired chamber.

> "Where glowing embers through the room
> Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;
> Far from all resort of mirth,
> Save the cricket on the hearth;"

but action,—vigorous exercise,—society,—earnest resolve,—the "quips and cranks and wanton wiles" of old Fuller, or Charles Lamb, and Jean Paul,—all these are their deadly foes; and sometimes a single magic word from these authors dispels them as the crowing of the cock does the spectres of the night. But the grand panacea,

the matchless sanative, which is an infallible cure for the disorder, is *exercise, exercise, exercise.* Plato thought so highly of exercise that he pronounced it a cure even for a wounded conscience; and Phillips, in his poem on the Spleen, says sententiously:

> "Fling but a stone, the giant dies."

If misfortune hits you hard, do you hit something else hard. Above all things, shun vacant hours. Remember that much leisure, though a pleasant garment to look at, is a very shirt of Nessus to wear. Who has forgotten the mournful confessions of Charles Lamb on this point? He who fretted over his compulsory monotonous life of thirty-five years of work, defied the chains of habit, and proclaimed that "positively the best thing a man can do is nothing, and next to that, perhaps, good works,"—how wretched he was when he had his wish of idleness granted to him! When a friend of Southey complained to him of low spirits, the poet said: "Translate Tristam Shandy into Hebrew, and you will be a happy man." There is nothing like business, pleasant work, a steady pegging away at some useful task, to brush away the cobwebs of melancholy from the brain. "When I write against the pope," said Luther, "I am not melancholy; for though I labor with the brains and understanding, then I write with joy of heart." Again he says: "When I am assailed with tribulations, I rush out among the pigs, rather than remain alone by myself. The human heart is like a millstone in a mill; when you put wheat under it, it turns and grinds, and brings the wheat to flour; if you put no wheat, it still grinds on, but then it is itself it grinds and wears away." Labor keeps the spirits bright, while pleasure palls, and idleness is "many gathered miseries in one." Burton, after filling five hundred folio pages with disquisitions on melancholy, could find no better words in which to sum up his advice than these: "BE NOT SOLITARY; BE NOT IDLE."

As to bad weather, don't become a slave to it, for it will rule you like a tyrant. It is said that even locomotive engines are low-spirited in damp and foggy weather; they enjoy their work when the air is crisp and frosty, but have an intense dislike to haze and Scotch mists. But you are not a machine, though "more fearfully and wonderfully made." There is no man so pitiable as he who has a constitution *servile to every skyey influence,*— who is at the mercy of barometrical changes whether he shall be happy or miserable. It is but the rising or falling of the mercury that makes such a man as poor as a beggar or as rich as a Rothschild,—as valiant as Cæsar, or as cowardly as Falstaff. Treat the weather as Goldsmith advises you to handle the nettle. Just so far as you are delicate with it, it will torment you; but

> "Grasp it like a man of mettle,
> And the rogue obeys you well."

It was Pascal, we think, who said: "All my fogs and fine days are in myself."

Whatever may be your misfortunes or your trials, do not give up to "the blues"; do not let despair have you on the hip. Are you at the bottom of fortune's wheel? Then every change must be for the better, and the next whirl may bring you to the top. When a man is flat on his back, he is always *looking up.* Do you fail to get your deserts in this world? Then fancy, as Carlyle says, "that thou deservest to be hanged (as it is most likely), thou wilt feel it happiness to be only shot; fancy that thou deservest to be hanged in a hair-halter, it will be a luxury to die in hemp." Has some one defrauded you? Turn your loss into a gain, like Charles Lamb, who could say: "Better that our family should have missed that legacy which old Dorrell cheated us out of, than be worth £2,000, and be without the idea of that specious old rogue": or do with your trials as Goethe did, who, his

mother said, whenever he had a grief made a poem on it. "The best way to lay the spectres of the mind," says Alexander Smith, "is to commit them to paper." Burton, the author of the Anatomy of Melancholy, when most dejected, used to go down to the Thames and hear the bargemen squabble. "I have heard," says Bishop Kennett, "that nothing at last could make him laugh but going down the Bridge-foot at Oxford and hearing the bargemen scold and storm and swear at one another; at which he would set his hands to his sides and laugh most profusely; yet in his chambers so mute and mopish that he was suspected to be *felo de se*." Are you afflicted with a rickety constitution, and do you look as thin as a lath that has had a split with the carpenter, and a fall out with the plasterer, as Hood says? "So much the better; remember how the smugglers trim the sails of the lugger to escape the notice of the cutter. Turn your edge to the old enemy, and mayhap he won't see you!" Or do as Rufus Choate did; when his *constitution* was all gone, he lived on the *by-laws*. Above all, keep up a stout heart, and you may still save the crazy vessel from drifting on a lee shore or foundering on the rocks. Don't fancy, because you have a stitch in the side, that you are nearly "sewed up"; or because you have *turned a little pale* that you are about to *kick the bucket*. Don't imagine, because you are consumptive at your meals, that you have got the consumption; nor because you have contributed a few times to public charities, that you will die of enlargement of the heart. Give a wide berth to sympathy-hunters, especially to those dyspeptic, green-spectacled gentlemen who bore people with their liver complaints, and give *catalogues raisonnés* of their digestive reminiscences during the week. Groans, as well as laughter are contagious, and despair is as catching as cutaneous complaints.

Finally, be not "over-exquisite to cast the fashion of uncertain ills;" for despondency, in a nice case, is the

overweight that may turn the scale, and you may kick the beam. "It is madness," says Jeremy Taylor, "to make the present miserable by fearing it may be ill to-morrow,—when your belly is full of to-day's dinner, to fear that you shall want the next day's supper; for it may be you shall not, and then to what purpose was this day's affliction? . . . This day only is ours; we are dead to yesterday, and we are not born to the morrow." Go often to concerts, and hear good music. Sir Philip Sidney, writing to his brother, tells him "to keep and increase" his music; "you will not believe what a want I find it in my melancholy times." It was with his harp that David exorcised the melancholy that haunted the soul of Saul. Luther, in his despondency, used to seize his flute, and revive his spirit with its strains, saying, "The devil hates good music." Philip the Fifth and Ferdinand his son, the hypochondriacal monarchs of Spain, found nothing else so efficacious in dispelling their incurable melancholy as the strains of sweet singers and harpists whom they retained as court physicians. Was it not to his fiddlers three that the renowned King Cole, that jolly old soul, owned his jollity?—Go and hear Gough and his "gape-seed" story; read Mark Twain and Bret Harte; and let your lungs crow like chanticleer, and as much like a gamecock as possible. There is nothing like a loud ha! ha! to frighten "the blues;" it puts the whole crew of them to flight, be they Prussian-blue or indigo, powder-blue or ultramarine. Its delicious alchemy converts even a tear into merriment, and makes wrinkles themselves expressive of youth and frolic. No man ever cut his throat with a broad grin on his face. Besides this, a laugh has another merit,—there is no remorse in it; it leaves no sting, except in the sides, and that goes off. Above all, *have a good conscience;* let there be no bugbears, no frightful fiends in your rear which dare not turn and look upon; and in the language of Bacon, "avoid envy, anger-fretting inwards; subtle and knotty

inquisitions; joys and exhilarations in excess; sadness not communicated; uncertain hopes; seek variety of delights, rather than surfeit of them; studies that fill the mind with splendid and illustrious objects, as histories, fables, contemplations of nature,"—and you will be able to stave off the foul fiend of melancholy, or, to exorcise him when he has possessed you, better than with all the prescriptions of Chrysippus or Crantor.

The Modesty of Genius.

THE question whether genius is conscious of its own powers, is one which has often been discussed, and upon which the acutest writers have held opposite opinions. In the affirmative we have the opinion of Sterling and others, while the negative is supported by the elaborate and powerful arguments of Carlyle. As a general thing, self-love is so natural to man that it would seem the merest affectation in him to pretend to be superior to it. It is, moreover, hardly too much to affirm that vanity, within certain limits, is almost an indispensable quality. A disposition which, for all practical purposes, is hardly distinguishable from vanity, is a necessary spur to a youth who would do anything great. Without a certain amount of self-confidence, no man would attempt any noble or difficult task, and even a giant-like intellect would expend itself upon the trifles of a dwarf. In almost every community there are certain persons who deem it their mission to dash the vanity of their neighbors. They delight to "take people down," to make them "know their places," as it is called; and if they can but cheat some vain man of his illusions, and rid him of the sense of superiority which is supposed to be so injurious to him as well as insufferable to the lookers on,—if they can only "take the conceit out of him," as the phrase goes,—they fancy they have done both him and the public a real service. To this end they are fond of citing certain well-worn illustrations,—such as the paper-kite, which soars into the air because of its lightness; the heavy-laden vessels, of which we see the less the more richly and heavily they are freighted; and the corn, which

bends downward when its ears are well filled, while the empty heads wave high in the field. Yet it is positively certain that no human being is the better for feeling insignificant and merely one of a class. Even though his struggles to rise superior to his fortune may take a ridiculous form, he yet may be serving both private and general interests. What, indeed, has been the main charge in the indictment against aristocratic governments, but that they permitted the ambition for distinction only to privileged classes?

A great deal of incense is burned in these days to what are called "self-made men"; yet we may be sure that no man who had had all "the conceit taken out of him" ever yet emancipated himself from "those twin-gaolers of the human heart, low birth and narrow fortune." It has been well said that no young man, however remarkable his talent, could ever have been justified, in cold blood, in taking all knowledge to be his province. The chances of a complete failure were so much greater than the chances of even modified success, that a very exuberant confidence in his own powers was implied in the undertaking. Coleridge, in speaking of vanity, somewhere says: "The decorous manners of this age attach a disproportionate opprobrium to this foible." There is no reason why the self-consciousness of real genius should be offensive. It is only those who "judge all nature from her feet of clay," and who would "pare the mountain to the plain to leave an equal baseness," that will call a man proud or vain because of his honest and due esteem of himself. Such "just honoring of ourselves" is, as Milton nobly says, "the radical moisture and fountain-head whence every laudable and worthy enterprise issues forth." The Apostle Paul has, with his usual good sense, given the very best advice on this point: "Let no man think more highly of himself than he ought to think,"—that is, than his talents will justify. It is only when a man exaggerates the merit of trifles, and sneers at the abilities and deeds of

others,—when like the fly upon the chariot-wheel, some petty, insignificant human insect boasts that *he* raises all the dust and hubbub of the world,—that our indignation is kindled. We are not so much vexed at a man's turning his own trumpeter, as at his pitching the key-note of his praises too high. But for a man of really profound genius to affect to be unaware of the greatness of his endowments is the most offensive kind of egotism; it is "the pride that apes humility."

Some of the most gifted men the world ever saw have been the most daring of egotists. In reading the writings of Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, and Wordsworth, one is not more struck with the matchless beauty of their creations than with the intense egotism that pervades them, and the lofty confidence with which they anticipate their immortality. It is often this very quality that forms the principal charm of their works. Their poetical heroes, in the majority of cases, are only personifications of their own feelings and passions. Who can doubt that such men have a proud consciousness of their own genius when they dash off some glorious work at a sitting, and with the rapidity and happiness of inspiration?

The Greek and Roman poets did not hesitate to declare that they had reared for themselves in their verse "monuments more lasting than brass." "*Orna me!*" was Cicero's constant cry, and he entreats Lucceius to write a separate history of Catiline's conspiracy, and to publish it quickly, that the consul who crushed the traitor might, while he yet lived, taste the sweetness of his glory. "I spoke with a divine power in the Senate," he writes one day to Atticus; "there never was anything like it." Epicurus wrote to a minister of state, "If you desire glory, nothing can bestow it more than the letters I write to you;" and Seneca quotes the word to Lucilius, adding: "What Epicurus promised to his friend, that I promise to you." When one of the two Guidos, Italian authors, eclipsed the other, Dante wrote:

> "Thus has one Guido from the other snatched
> The letter'd pride ; and he perhaps is born
> Who shall drive either from their nest."

Not less conscious of their own abilities, and ready
avow that consciousness to the world, are men of geni
in modern times. Shakspeare does not hesitate to say
one of his sonnets :

> "Nor marble, nor the gilded monuments
> Of Princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme ;"

and, to a large extent, the interest of his plays depen
upon the egotism of his heroes and heroines. Who doe
not love the egotism of the melancholy Jacques, who fil
the forest of Ardennes with the gloom of his own soul
and in what but his proneness to selfish thoughtfulnes
lies the charm of Hamlet ? The most fascinating passage
in Othello are those in which the Moor speaks of his fier
love of battle, of his personal appearance and history, an
bids farewell to the pride, pomp and circumstance of wa
in an outburst of selfish sorrow. Brutus is sternly ego-
tistical ; and our interest in Macbeth reaches its clima
only after the murder, when he reveals to us the work-
ings of his soul, now driven in upon itself. The lofty
pride of Coriolanus is the ruling passion of his nature
and it is even more palpable when he scorns to have hi
"nothings monstered," than when he boasts—

> "Like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
> Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli."

Milton, whose intense egotism has been pronounced almost as conspicuous as his genius, evidently believed his great epic poem to be a work which the world "would not willingly let die." In the touching sonnet on the loss of his eyes, he speaks of the support which he derived in his affliction from the proud consciousness of having

> "lost them overplied
> In liberty's defence, my noble task
> Of which all Europe rings from side to side."

Frequently, in replying to an opponent, he digresses into an account of himself, his education, his plans; seeming to say: "Remember it is *I*, John Milton, a man of such and such antecedents, with such and such intellectual powers, who says this." At the close of his life he unquestionably believed himself to be the greatest writer in England,—one whose bare *ex-cathedra* statement should have as much weight in the world of mind as the decree of a magistrate in the order of civil life. In this lofty self-assertion the great Puritan poet but followed the example of his predecessor, Chaucer, who, shy and timid as he was in company, causing his host of the Tabard to say to him.

> "Thou look'st as if thou would'st find a hare;
> Forever on the ground I see thee stare:"

yet did not scorn to speak of himself as the "most noble philosophicall poete in Englishe," and to assert that "in noble sayings" and many other excellent qualities of a poet, he "passeth all other makers." Thomas Hobbes was unquestionably one of England's greatest thinkers and his metaphysical, moral and political writings are distinguished alike for their closeness of logic and clearness and purity of style; yet he was fully aware of this, and boasted that "though physics were a new science, yet civil philosophy was still newer, since it could not be styled older than his book *De Cive*." When John Dryden was congratulated on the brilliancy of his famous Ode on St. Cecilia's Day,—"You are right," he replied, "a nobler ode was never produced, and never will be." Alexander Pope's good opinion of himself leaks out in numerous passages of his writings. Publishing his essay on Man anonymously, he spoke of it as a master-piece of its kind. He evidently deemed his critical opinions as infallible as the

religious ones of Pope Alexander. Lord Bacon was
lofty egotist, and confidently predicted his own im
mortality. Buffon said that, of great geniuses of moder
times, there were but five,—"Newton, Bacon, Leibnit
Montesquieu, and *Buffon*." Everybody is familiar wit
the daring avowal of Kepler, which reaches the sublim
of egotism: "I dare not insult mankind by confessin
that I am he who has turned Science to advantage. If
am pardoned, I shall rejoice; if blamed, I shall endure it
The die is cast; I have written this book, and whether i
be read by posterity or by my contemporaries, is of n
consequence; it may well wait for a reader during one
century, when God himself during 6,000 years has waited
for an observer like myself!"

The egotism of Julius Scaliger almost staggers belief. He looked on himself as the monarch of letters, just as the ancients regarded the Persian King as The King; and spoke of other scholars with profound contempt. He pronounced Bellarmine an atheist, and Meursius a pedant and the son of a monk; he sneered at Baronius, compared Scioppius to an ape, and affirmed that St. Jerome was an ass. Not less overweening was the self-esteem of Milton's great opponent, Salmasius. As he was conversing one day in the royal library with Gaulmin and Maussac, "I think," said Gaulmin, "that we three can match our heads against all that there is learned in Europe." To this Salmasius replied: "Add to all that there is learned in Europe, yourself and M. de Maussac, and I can match my single head against the whole of you." A celebrated French lawyer, Charles Dumoulin, if we may believe Balzac, often wrote at the top of his opinions given upon consultation: "I, who yield to no man, and who have from no man anything to learn." The *Ego et Rex meus*—"I and my King," of Cardinal Wolsey, has become a proverb. "When I am dead, you will not easily meet with another John Hunter," said the great English anatomist.

The stories told of the intense egotism of Richardson, the novelist, place him in the front rank of literary Narcissuses. No mother was ever fonder of her children than he of the offspring of his brain. No visitor was ever suffered to leave him till he had listened to some of his productions; and, once in a large company, when a gentleman just from Paris told him that he had seen one of his novels on the French King's table, he feigned not to hear, because the rest of the company were at the moment occupied with other topics. Waiting some time for a pause, he asked, with affected carelessness, "What was that, sir, which you were just saying about the French King?" "Oh! nothing of any consequence," replied his informant, disgusted with the trick, and determined to mortify his self-conceit.

Sir Godfrey Kneller, the painter, as he lay on his deathbed, dreamed of distinctions in heaven, and very complacently reported to his friends the effect his name produced when announced at the august portals: "As I approached, Saint Peter very civilly asked my name. I said it was Kneller. I had no sooner said so than Saint Luke, who was standing just by, turned toward me and said, with a great deal of sweetness: 'What! the *famous* Sir Godfrey Kneller, of England?' 'The very same, sir,' says I, 'at your service.'" Hogarth had an excellent opinion of the abilities of Hogarth. When he was at work upon his "Marriage-à-la-Mode," he told Reynolds that the world would soon be gratified "with such a sight as it never had seen equalled." Northcote, a brother painter, while he could detect and ridicule this weakness of Hogarth, was unconscious of his own egregious vanity. Being once asked by Sir William Knighton what he thought of the Prince Regent, he replied, "I am not acquainted with him." "Why, his Royal Highness says that he knows you." "Know me! Pooh! that's all his brag!"

The biography of Laurence Sterne shows that he was one of those authors who gloat over their own conceptions,

and who always think their latest works their masterpieces. Burns was comparatively modest; yet, speaking of his days of obscurity, he says: "*Pauvre Inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an opinion of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favor." Goldsmith's self-conceit is proverbial. It "stuck out" in every look, gesture, and motion. "He would never," said Garrick, "allow a superior in any art, from writing poetry down to dancing a hornpipe." Going into an exhibition of puppets, he warmly exclaimed, on their dexterously tossing a pike: "*Pshaw! I can do it better myself*"; and broke his shins the same evening at the house of Burke, in trying to show that he could eclipse the puppets in leaping over a stick. Oratory, he said, was a mere knack, and, hearing a speech of Burke eulogized, boasted that he could do as well himself. Being dared to the trial, he mounted a chair and stuck fast after three sentences; yet reiterated his boast, saying that on this occasion he was "out of luck." When Moser, the Swiss, cut short his conversation at an Academy dinner with a "Stay, stay, Toctor Shonson is going to say something," Goldsmith was almost beside himself with jealousy and rage. Lope de Vega trumpeted his own praise under a pseudonym; Butler could harangue with great gust on the merits of Hudibras; and the inscription under Boileau's portrait, which gives the palm to the French satirist over Juvenal and Horace, is known to have come from the pen of—Boileau. Wordsworth was a thorough egotist. He never hesitated to express his contempt of his critics, and his self-assurance of his own powers. Nothing less than a large degree of such assurance could have enabled him to bear up against the ridicule with which he was assailed by a generation brought up under different traditions. In Southey's correspondence we find the author of "Thalaba" speaking with the utmost confidence of his poems as certain to render his name immortal. Hazlitt, who could

criticise other writers so sharply, had evidently a good opinion of himself. Writing from Winterslow, he says of his Table-Talks; "I could swear (were they not mine) the thoughts in many of them are founded as a rock, free as air, the tone like an Italian picture."

It is well known that the hero of Trafalgar and the Nile took an almost childish pleasure in being stared at, and called "great" and "glorious" to his face. His estrangement from his wife has been attributed to her lack of interest in his reputation, and seeming unconsciousness that her husband was the idol of the nation; and it was in part, doubtless, because Lady Hamilton recognised the fact, and often spoke of it, that he became so infatuated with her charms. Bonaparte was an incarnation of egotism, and so self-conscious that he was visibly offended when after his early victories a vast assembly turned their eyes for a moment from him to look at a beautiful woman. There can be no doubt that William Pinkney was one of the greatest forensic advocates that America has produced, and there can be no doubt that he was one of the proudest. William Wirt, speaking of his absoluteness of manner, says: "Socrates confessed that all the knowledge he had been able to acquire seemed only to convince him that he knew nothing. * * * Pinkney would make you believe that *he* knew everything."

Need we allude to that literary Narcissus, Lamartine, who was forever attitudinizing and surveying himself in a mirror; or to the enormous vanity of Chateaubriand, which, Sainte-Beuve says, *l'univers englouti n'assouvrait pas*, and which prompts him incessantly to ask: "What would the Nineteenth Century have been without my writings?" Enormous, however, as is the egotism of these men, it is overtopped by that of Victor Hugo, who, when reproached for his unhealthy craving for "effects," —the excess of tirade and antithesis in his dramas,—replies: "People object to my love of antithesis; as if God were not more antithetical than I"; and who again im-

periously demands from Heaven an explanation of th great mystery in such terms as these:

> "Et maintenant, Seigneur, *expliquons nous, tous deux!*"

John Knox, the Reformer, was a glorious egotist. I his chronicle he speaks of himself always in the third per son, as if he were writing the biography of some grea man whose deeds he had had the good fortune to witness John Knox's figure is ever the conspicuous figure in Joh Knox's book. But of all egotists, of ancient or moder times, William Cobbett towers the highest above his fel lows. To such a pitch does he carry his self-praise a times that it seems as if he were quizzing his readers, o rather as if it were a caricature, or wicked invention o an enemy. "I am your superior," he boastingly writes t the Bishop of Winchester. "I have ten times your talent and a thousand times your industry and zeal." Few pole mics have held a more caustic pen, but his frame was o the Herculean rather than the Apollonian cast; he though a man could not be strong enough unless he incessantl displayed his thews. And yet, in his bold and daring self praise, there is something quite noble, compared with th mean, sneaking, shuffling tricks of many other writer who would play the same game if they had the courage "There are some men," says Coleridge, "who actually flat- ter themselves that they abhor all egotism, and never be- tray it in their writings or discourse. But watch these men narrowly," he adds, "and in the greater number o cases you will find their thoughts, and feelings, and mode of expression, saturated with the passion of contempt *which is the concentrated vinegar of egotism.*"

The examples we have given abundantly prove, we think, that there is more plausibility than truth in the sentiment that genius is unconscious of its powers. No doubt it is often true that, when a man of genius is vain he is vain of what is not his genius. The greatest auth-

ors, like mothers who have fondled their rickety bantlings most lovingly, have often been proudest of the poorest of their works. It is natural to exaggerate the value of that which has cost us much effort to produce. We hug and fondle an object which we have acquired with many struggles; we overprize a talent which we have trained and cultivated with assiduous care. But to suppose a man of extraordinary intellectual power to be unconscious of the fact, is to suppose him self-ignorant,—to know less of himself than smaller men. As well might you suppose a Titan to be ignorant of his giant stature, or a Hercules not to know his physical strength. The truth is, an affectation of humility in such a man, who towers a head and shoulders above his fellows, would be as ridiculous as the struttings of a dwarf. Mock-modesty is even more disgusting than unwarranted self-praise, as it adds hypocrisy to conceit. "All great men," says Ruskin, "not only know their business, but they usually know that they know it, and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them; only they don't think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows that he can build a good dome at Florence; Albert Durer writes calmly to one who had found fault with his work: 'it cannot be better done.' Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else; only they do not expect their fellowmen therefore to fall down and worship them. They have a curious under-sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not in them but through them; that they could not be any other thing than God made them. And they see *something divine and God-made in every other man* they meet, and they are endlessly, foolishly, and incredibly merciful."

Archdeacon Hare, who believes that unconsciousness of its ability belongs to genius in its purity, admits that it cannot be preserved undefiled any more than that which belongs to goodness in its purity. "There are numbers

of alarums on all sides," he says, "to rouse our self-con sciousness, should it ever lapse or flag, from our cradl upward. Whithersoever we go, we have bells on our toe to regale our carnal hearts with their music, and bell-me meet us in every street to sound their chimes in our ear Others tell us how clever we are; and we repeat the swee strains with ceaseless iteration, magnifying them at ever repetition. Hence it is next to a marvel if genius ca ever preserve any of that unconsciousness which belong to its essence. * * * Narcissus-like, it wastes away i gazing on its own sweet image." There is truth in thi but truth too one-sided to give us a just view of the case It is doubtless true that every man's eye should be fixe upon his work rather than upon himself and that he wil produce the best results when he feels himself moved by divine afflatus, and produces his results unconsciousl To take a good aim one should look at the target, instea of thinking of his own skill or staring at his rifle; an the orator should be absorbed in his theme and self-for getful if he would sway the souls of his hearers. But h would be more than human if in the intervening hour between his performance he did not think of his ow merits and of the testimonies of others to his success.

Again, it is evident that self-esteem and vanity produc upon different persons effects diametrically opposite, in spiring one to greater efforts, while it tempts another t indolence and non-exertion. Nay, these qualities may b attended with opposite results in the same person. W are told in the memoir of Baron Bunsen that, calling one day on Thorwalsden, the sculptor, he found him greatl depressed in spirits. He had lately finished his colossal statue of Christ for Copenhagen, and said that he feared his genius must have reached its best, and be about to decline, "for," said he, "I have never before been satisfied with any of my works; I am satisfied with this, and shall never have a great idea again." The vanity of Wolfe led him to make a fool of himself, by flourishing his sword

and indulging in silly gasconade and bravado before Lord Chatham; but the same quality inspired him with that heroic spirit which led him, after a bitter repulse from the enemy, and while convalescing from a fever, to scale the heights of Abraham, defeat Montcalm, and capture the hitherto impregnable fortress of Quebec. The vanity of Wordsworth, as we have already seen, enabled him to despise the sneers of his reviewers, and to work out the work of his life, in spite of the neglect of the public; but it led him too often to become a literary sloven, to spoil a noble thought by mean and creeping language, and to be so narrow in his critical judgments, as to speak scornfully of poems by Gray and Burns which had stirred men of the most exquisite taste like the sound of a trumpet. On the other hand, the vanity of Pope tempted him to stoop to the meanest artifices to catch applause, and condemned him to torture from the pettiest literary insects that buzzed about his path, but at the same time it enabled him "to become within his own limits the most exquisite of artists in words, to increase in skill as he increased in years, and to coin phrases for posterity even out of the most trifling ebullitions of passing spite."

Sensitiveness to Criticism.

IT has been often remarked that public station is a sort of pillory, and that every man who becomes a candidate for office voluntarily sets himself up as a target, at which everybody may fire off his bullets of abuse. In the moral world, as in the physical, elevation is exposure, and utter insignificance is a better coat of mail against the darts of slander than the noblest virtues of which human nature can boast. No man, therefore, should for a moment think of going into public life unless he is prepared to become "the best abused man in Christendom." Never until he can smile with indifference while his finest sensibilities are scraped by satrical sandpaper and moral oyster-shells, should he regard himself as qualified for eminent station. The Indian calmly sings his death-song when tortured at the stake; but the politician should be able to fiddle when not only himself, but all his Rome, is burning. For this reason we cannot help regarding the sensitiveness to criticism manifested by our public men as one of the most unfortunate traits in their characters. Foreigners have often called us a thin-skinned people; but many of our public men seem to have no skin whatever. They are "raw" all over, and the meanest insect is able to sting them into a rage. They have a memory so sadly tenacious as never to allow a solitary line or word of censure that has been written against them to escape; and so overweening is their egotism, that the pettiest newspaper squib, worthy only of contempt, must be answered with solemn comment and contradiction. The result is, that not a few spend a good portion of their lives in defending themselves from newspaper assaults. Can anything be more

foolish than this? Is there a surer sign of weakness, of the lack of all weight and dignity of character.

If ever a man of respectable character engages in a losing game, it is when he suffers himself to be dragged into controversy, especially into a personal controversy, with a scurrilous enemy. In every fair controversy there is something like equality in the combatants, something like the same stake in the issue. But in warring with an unscrupulous foe, and especially with the editor of an unprincipled newspaper, an honorable, high-minded man is sure of being worsted; for while the former, reckless of all the laws of honorable hostility, and feeling not the least restraint from delicacy, either of taste or feeling, will use at once his sword and poisoned dagger, his hands and teeth, and his envenomed breath, and will not scruple, upon occasion, to discharge upon his adversary a shower of filth, from which neither courage nor dexterity can afford any protection; the latter, being not only unversed in the slang of the pot-house and the ribaldry of the brothel, but anxious to assert nothing that is not strictly true, will be temperate in his language, and will make use only of those polished sarcasms which pass in decent society, but whose edge is too fine to pierce the skin of a professional blackguard. Such a controversy, therefore must necessarily be an unequal match. It would be like a well-dressed gentleman engaging in a mud-throwing combat with a filthy ragamuffin. The latter, from his long experience in the dirty game, will throw a dozen handfuls of mud to the former's one, and in a few moments will beplaster him from head to foot; while the little which *he* can throw, even if he is willing to soil his hands, will never be perceived on his adversary's already nasty garments. It was justly said by Michael Angelo, when he was advised to resent the insolence of some obscure upstart, that "he who contends with the base loses all." You cannot scuffle with the filthy, even if victorious, without getting soiled.

Everybody who has been at school has noticed that if any boy is peculiarly irascible, or susceptible of irritation under the various annoyances and torments to which schoolboy life is exposed, he is doubly sure of being victimized,—is pounced upon and worried at every opportunity. The world, in this respect, is a big school. It is a curious fact that the mass of men, either from instinctive malice and love of mischief, or from a fondness of exercising petty tyranny, take cruel but exquisite delight in teasing the sensitive and annoying the irritable; while he who, careless of their taunts and jeers, laughs with an air of unconcern at the shafts which malice or envy may hurl at him, soon ceases to be annoyed by them. A public man ought to have a hide as tough and thick as that of a rhinoceros. Not till his epidermis has been hardened to such a degree of impenetrability that rifle-balls will be flattened by it, and his sensibility has become so blunted that the stab of a dagger will be mistaken for a mosquito-bite, is he fit for eminent station. No character is so exalted as to be above the audacity, none so sacred as to scare the rapaciousness, of those who are libellers by trade. A public man who escapes being assailed by censors and calumniators, generally owes his safety to the thickness of his skull. The public themselves view the matter in the same light. They know that in an orchard a tree that bears poor fruit is left unmolested, while one that hangs down with delicious pears or apples is continually pelted with stones. Men of letters, being an *irritabile genus*, ought particularly to cultivate an indifference to the attacks of the press. Editors and critics are proverbially without bowels, and the more an author winces under their attacks, the more pertinaciously will they apply the literary lash. The young *littérateur*, who is confident of his power, should rush before the public as the warrior rushes into battle, resolved to hack and hew his way into eminence and influence; instead of whimpering like a schoolboy at every scratch, he should acknowledge only

home-thrusts,—deadly, life-destroying blows,—and be determined to conquer or to die.

There is but one way to get rid of lampooners, and that is *to let them alone;* then their calumnies will die of themselves, or become perfectly harmless. No one likes to waste his powder; and there is nothing which men are sooner mortified at spending in vain than their abuse and ridicule. The only course for the public man is, like Sir Walter Scott, "to arm himself with the triple brass of indifference against all the roving warfare of satire, parody, and sarcasm; to laugh, if the jest be a good one, or, if otherwise, to let it hum and buzz itself to sleep." The contrary course, however successful for a time, is one of which he will, sooner or later, bitterly repent. To whimper, to chafe, and to fret,—to show that you are keenly nettled by some affront or incivility,—what a new sting it gives to grief? How it accomplishes the very object of your enemy! What a suicide it is!—for self-murder is the only way by which moral death comes to any man. We all know how much the author of the Dunciad suffered from the swarms of enemies, most of them individually insignificant, and many of them personally contemptible, whom he consigned to an immortality of infamy in that fiercest of poetical philippics. Though the whole vocabulary of irony is exhausted, and the poet literally flays and dismembers the miserable scribblers, yet it is evident that the satirist suffered more than his victims, and that the deepest wounds inflicted by the keen and polished weapon of his sarcasm were as flea-bites to the agonies which nerved his own arm to wield that weapon. "It requires no depth of philosophic reflection," says the author of Waverley, "to perceive that the petty warfare of Pope with the dunces of his period could not have been carried on without his suffering the most acute torture, such as a man must endure from mosquitoes, by whose stings he suffers agony, though he can crush them by myriads in his grasp." It was one of the weaknesses of the great Duke

of Marlborough that, beyond all other men of his time, he was sensitive to the attacks of the press. He complained to Harley and St. John in terms of positive anguish of the attacks to which he was subject. The moral weakness of Napoleon Bonaparte was betrayed by none of his acts more plainly than by his sensitiveness to newspaper criticism. The sovereign of a great empire, he entered into a war of words with British journalists, and lowered his own dignity by allowing the world to see that he was stung by the criticisms of ephemeral newspapers, whose comments he might have safely ignored. "It was easy," says Madame De Rémusat, "for the English journalists to find out how hard their remarks hit the First Consul, and a little later the Emperor of France, and they accordingly redoubled their attacks. How many times, when we saw him gloomy and out of temper, did Madame Bonaparte tell us it was because he had read some article against himself in the *Courier* or the *Sun!* He tried to wage a pen-and-ink war with the English press; he subsidized certain journals in London, expended a great deal of money, and deceived no one either in France or in England."

Those who are the victims of newspaper abuse should remember that the licentiousness of the press is an evil which, sooner or later, cures itself. No man, as Dr. Bentley used to say, was ever written down, except by himself; and we may add that no man ever wrote upon whose productions the public did not ultimately pass righteous judgment. All that criticism can do is to hasten or retard that judgment; permanently to change it is beyond its power.

Do not, then, rush into print when you are attacked by a blackguard writer or speaker, but pass by his abuse in absolute silence. Remember that it is your own thought only that can barb the arrow shot from another's bow; that it is your own pride that makes another's criticism rankle, your egotism that is hurt by another's self-asser-

tion. We know that this is sometimes "a hard lesson." Some of the best men that have ever lived have been stung almost to death by criticism. Tannahill, the charming lyric poet of Scotland, chanced to hear his productions ridiculed, and never smiled or held up his head afterward. The light, reckless remarks preyed upon his sensitive mind till they drove him to suicide. Cowper was almost maddened by some nameless critic's scorn, and Robertson, of Brighton, was cut to the heart by an article in a provincial newspaper; "ignorant though it is," said he, "it is before me wherever I turn." Not so with our great-souled Lincoln. When a friend wished to communicate to some newspaper the facts, as they had actually occurred, concerning some matter about which the President had been outrageously abused,—"Oh, no," was the noble reply, "at least not now. If I were to try to read, much less answer, all the attacks made on me, this shop might as well be closed for any other business. I do the very best I know how,—the very best I can; and I mean to keep doing so until the end. If the end brings me out all right, what is said against me won't amount to anything. If the end brings me out wrong, ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference." When Dr. Francis Wayland was asked for his opinion touching the publication of a reply by a western pastor to some spiteful newspaper attacks upon him, he said: "tell him to take no notice of the attacks. A man's *character* will take care of his *reputation*." Macaulay, speaking of the attacks upon Dr. Johnson by the Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicols, and Hendersons, who had for various reasons become his enemies, says they "did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give them importance by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learning, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter,—

'Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contendere tecum.'

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He always maintained that fame was a shuttlecock which could be kept up only by being beaten back as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that fine apothegm of Bentley, that no man was ever written down but by himself." No writer has ever been more vehemently denounced than Emile Zola; but instead of whimpering and whining under the treatment he has received, he regards it as a positive advantage. "The Parisian," he says, "never purchases a book spontaneously, just from curiosity; he never buys a book until his ears are filled with it, and it has become an event worth chronicling, of which you must be able to talk in society. If it be spoken of, no matter what is said, its fortune is made. Criticism gives life to everything; it is only silence that destroys. Paris is an ocean; but an ocean in which you are lost in the calm, but saved in the storm."* It was Jeffrey's assault on Byron which first woke to activity the powers of that great genius. Without that sharp prick, so quickly resented, Byron might have dallied in obscurity for years, before putting forth his energies. "It was the birth-pang of the poet. He came furious to life, ready-armed like Minerva, blazing in sudden light and deadly power, with a quiver full of poisoned arrows, an unsheathed sword which cut wherever it touched."

"If the critics treat your first book ill," wrote Carlyle to a new author, "write the second better,—so much better as to shame them." If your work does not vindicate itself you should not waste a moment in trying to vindicate it, but should spend your time in writing something which will need no defence. As Coleridge says:

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* "Studies of Paris," by Edmondo de Amicis.

> "If a foe have kenn'd,
> Or, worse than foe, an alienated friend,
> A rib of dry rot in thy ship's stout side,
> Think it God's message, and in humble pride
> With heart of oak replace it,—thine the gains,—
> Give him the rotten timber for his pains!"

The greatest men have usually been the most heedless to the censure of others. Scipio scorned to reply to a charge of corruption, saying, "*Hoc die cum Hannibale bene et feliciter pugnavi.*" One of the most notable qualities of Lord Macaulay was his comparative indifference to hostile criticism. As a writer, he was even less thin-skinned than as a politician. According to his biographer, when he felt conscious that he had done his very best,—when all that lay within his own power had been faithfully and diligently performed,—he would not permit himself to chafe under adverse criticism, nor to waste time and temper by engaging in controversies about his own works. He acted in strict accordance with Bentley's maxim, already quoted, which he was fond of repeating in print and talk. With Johnson, he was convinced, both from reading and observation, that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written *about* them, but by what is written *in* them; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors whose works are certain to die. "I have never been able," says Macaulay, "to discover that a man is at all the worse for being attacked. One foolish line of his own does him more harm than the ablest pamphlets written against him by other people."

When Catullus wrote a stinging epigram on Julius Cæsar, what did "the foremost man of all the world," do? Cut off Catullus's head? No; he simply invited him to supper. So when a courtier told Constantine that the mob had broken the head off his statue with stones, the emperor simply lifted his hands to his head, saying: "It

is very surprising, but I don't feel hurt in the least." Frederick the Great once saw a crowd of men staring at something on a wall. Riding up, he found that the object of curiosity was a scurrilous placard against himself. The placard had been posted up so high that it was not easy to read it. Frederick ordered his attendants to take it down, and put it lower. "My people and I," he said, "have come to an agreement which satisfies us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please." One day the celebrated D'Alembert, who was a friend of the Prussian monarch, and who had some notable weaknesses, was insulted by a gazetteer in the States of Frederick. The philosopher thereupon denounced the libeller to the king, which drew from the latter the following admirable reply: "I know that a Frenchman, a country-man of yours, daubs regularly two sheets of paper a week at Cleves; I know that people buy his sheets, and that a fool always finds a greater fool to read him; but I find it very difficult to persuade myself that a writer of that temper can prejudice your reputation. Ah, my good D'Alembert, if you were king of England, you would encounter many other lampoons, with which your very faithful subjects would furnish you to try your patience. If you knew what a number of infamous writings your dear countrymen have published against me during the war, you would laugh at this miserable scribbler. I have not deigned to read all these works which are the offspring of the hate and envy of my enemies, and I have recollected that beautiful ode of Horace: '*The wise man continues unmoved.*'"

When Voltaire complained of his critics to Fontenelle, the latter opened a great box of uncut pamphlets, and said: "Here is all that has been written against me." He had never read a page of them. In the same spirit Cardinal Mazarin preserved and used to display, in forty-four bound quarto volumes, all the libels ever written against him. It is said that when the elder Kean was playing in

New York the same round of characters with the celebrated Cooper, and was daily attacked by a gazette in the insterest of his rival, he ordered his man, Miller, to take the paper with a pair of tongs and remove it from his presence, saying that "he never read attacks." This was certainly wiser than embroiling himself in a long-winded and irritating controversy, in which he would have been likely to do many foolish things, and to receive many hard blows, however crushing those he might have dealt against his enemies. When the storm of abuse was raging most fiercely against Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, the champion of slave emancipation, he was asked by a friend, "What shall I say when I hear people abusing you?" "Say!" he replied, snapping his fingers, "say *that.* You good folks think too much of your good name. Do right, and right will be done you." The severest rebuke, oftentimes, to an enemy is silence; the most galling commentary, neglect. "Speak!" screamed a termagant to one on whom she had discharged a whole vocabulary of oaths,—"speak, you devil, or I shall burst!"

The Ideal and the Real.

THE great Catholic writer, Count Joseph de Maistre, in a letter to a friend at the Sardinian court, says: "You are kind enough to caution me against the heat of my style. I will only add, it is impossible to have my style without having my defects. Would you have fire which does not burn, or water which does not wet? A word more on a certain Parisian irony for which I have a turn, which I may sometimes abuse. When irony is exercised upon nothings, it is a silly superfluity. It is not the same when it sharpens the reasoning,—when it makes a puncture, so to speak, to let it pass through, as the needle does the thread." In this frank acknowledgment we have one of the thousand illustrations that might be cited of the truth that there is no excellence without some corresponding drawback; that the greatest writer or artist cannot escape from himself,—cannot avoid the inevitable fate of all, which is to have the faults of their qualities. It is a fact well understood by every competent art-critic, that faultless precision of detail is the sure mark of mediocrity; anomaly, the invariable characteristic of the highest order of genius in every branch of imitative art. Great poets and novelists do not hesitate to disregard the strict rules of narrative probability, especially when they are likely to hurt the general effect of a composition. The great Italian painters and sculptors did not scruple, at times, to violate truth and nature where a rigid adherence to them would have defeated their aims. Sometimes they made a shadow fall on objects which, on strictly optical principles, it would not have reached; at other times, a figure in the background of a picture was drawn larger or

smaller, more or less distinct, than the strict rules of perspective enjoin.

Again, not only do we find these anomalies abounding in the works of genius, but we find that the greater the master, the greater are his faults. Just in proportion as his strength of wing enables him to soar away from the beaten track, the groove in which mediocrity is content to plod, is he likely to fall into mistakes and errors. Raphael's animals are all bad, and so are those of Da Vinci. How the disciples in Raphael's "Miraculous Draught of Fishes" contrived to preserve their equilibrium in the boatlets which the artist allows them, has always been a mystery to critics. The figures of most landscape painters are bad, and even in the productions of the greatest masters,—Claude, Poussin, Salvator,—there is much carelessness about details and particular truths. One of these painters draws the anatomy of a tree well, but fails in clothing it with leaves; another paints sunshine admirably, but gives us woolen clouds. Claude, so happy in his general effects, drew impossible curves and angles among his tree trunks. Poussin's "Deluge" with boats, and "Saint Jerome" with an eight-day clock before him, are well known to amateurs. One of the Dutch artists makes the river of Eden a canal, and builds Babylon upon piles. Again, in painting, as in poetry and even in prose, many an object is used, not for its own sake, but as a foil, to give effect to something else. Thus the cows and oxen which Hart, instead of drawing with scrupulous fidelity,—has blotched with a few broad strokes into the foreground of the beautiful autumn landscape before us, were put there, not to be looked *at*, but to be looked *over*, as the spectator gazes at the gorgeous woods beyond,—woods which look as if a splendid sunset had fallen in fragments upon them, and set them all ablaze.

An artist cannot tell all the truth and show everything in a picture; he must concentrate his force, and therefore we do not complain of the omission or even misrepresen-

tation of some of the accessories, if the capital object is portrayed with vividness, beauty and truth. It is true that these omissions or misrepresentations cannot, abstractly, be defended: and so far a Turner who gives us half-finished cows and donkeys, and a Shakspeare that makes Bohemia a seaport and arms the Romans of Pharsalia with the Spanish rapier of the sixteenth century, must yield the palm of superiority to merely mechanical artists, who are "coldly correct and critically dull." But we must remember that had Turner and Shakspeare been scrupulous about details and ambitious of microscopic excellence, they would not have been Turner and Shakspeare, and the world would have lacked a "Venice" and a "Macbeth." Indeed the great difference between a great artist and a little one lies in their respective powers of generalization,—in the comparative adroitness and skill with which they balance the general and the particular. A great painter has the courage to commit faults; he neglects or casts aside many petty details, that he may give expression to greater truths; while a feeble painter guards every detail, and prides himself on the number of particulars to which he faithfully adheres. So with oratory, history, biography and essays; the masters in these departments of speaking and writing aim, as a rule, at a general end or impression, instead of wasting their time upon minutiæ or little effects. They cull, pick, square reject, and amalgamate their materials, so as to produce a certain unity of effect. In short, they group instead of analyzing, and produce by a few master touches results which pre-Raphaelite minuteness and laborious finish would mar.

What can be more unjust, therefore, than that petty criticism so common in our journals and reviews, which overlooks the main qualities of a literary or artistic production, in a microscopic examination of the details? There are critics so constituted that they are utterly blind to the merits of a painting or a poem, if they detect a few

faults or flaws, when, perhaps, these very faults may serve as foils to set off the excellence of the work as a whole, and even the discordance of details may contribute to the general harmony of effect. They are almost ready to smash a painted window in their anxiety to destroy an insect on it, and, as Whately says, in looking at a peacock's train, they would fix on every spot where the feathers were worn or the colors faded, and see nothing else. A late writer, speaking of the subtleties in which some of the Homeric critics have indulged, justly observes that there is no one of their practices more fallacious or pernicious than that, lately so much in vogue, of picking petty flaws and holes in the mechanical structure of the poems, while all their grander features of moral and poetical harmony are overlooked. "Against such an ordeal no Epic composition, even if indited by the pen of Caliope herself, could stand for a moment." A critic of this stamp once went through several poems of Hans Christian Anderson, noticing the number of times he had used the word "beautiful," or some similar word,—which at last led a little girl, six years old, who had listened with surprise to the strictures, to take up the book and pointing to the conjunction "and," observe: "There is still a little word, sir, that you have not scolded about."

The observations we have made concerning the products of the pen, the brush, and the chisel, apply with equal force to the writers and artists themselves,—indeed, to the physical, mental, and moral qualities of every human being. It is a trite remark that no woman, however beautiful or lovely, is free from all defects. In the most faultless daughter of Eve that ever dances before mortal vision, there is always some blemish which forbids her being declared perfect. She has, perhaps, a lovely face with an ungraceful figure, or an elegant figure with a plain face; or the ear is too large, the nose too small, the hand or foot too big, or some other blemish peeps out to betray her earthly origin. The perfection of which we so

often speak has, in fact, no existence; it is only an idea of the mind, created by our fancying a collection of all fine features in one person. In painting and sculpture we have a realization of such an idea on canvas or in stone; but nobody for a moment dreams that it is ever actualized in nature. In the same way, by piecing together all the good moral qualities, we may conceive of individuals perfect in mental constitution, or combining every species of mental and moral excellence; but, like winged men, mermaids, and griffins, they are only fictions of the brain. We never meet with such persons in the street or by the fireside, any more than we meet with paragons of female beauty that combine in themselves all possible fine features without one defect or blemish.

It is true that there are plenty of such model men and women in romance, for your novelist never hesitates to blend together the most incongruous qualities in one favorite character. But nature is much more frugal in her distribution of mental endowments than thus to heap together all manner of shining qualities in one glaring mass. As the fleet greyhound has no scent, and the peacock, which delights us with the beauty of its plumage, has a discordant voice; as the gaudy flower has little fragrance, and the hardiest and the loftiest trees are comparatively barren of fruit, nearly all productive trees being ugly little cripples; so every son and daughter of Adam has certain desirable mental or moral qualities, but no one can boast of them all. "How," asks Sir William Temple, in his essay on Ancient and Modern Learning, "can a man hope to excel in all qualities, when some are produced by the heat, others by the coldness of the brain and temper? The abilities of man must fall short on one side or the other, like too scanty a blanket when you are a-bed; if you pull it upon your shoulders, you leave your feet bare; if you thrust it down upon your feet, your shoulders are uncovered." Julian Charles Young, who knew Wordsworth and Coleridge, tells us that the former used to

speak regretfully of the moral flaws in the latter's character,—his opium-eating, ingratitude to Southey, and neglect of his parental and conjugal obligations; while Coleridge, in turn, denounced Wordsworth's parsimony in the same breath in which he vaunted his purity and piety. "There is no greater monster," adds Mr. Young, "than a faultless man."

As this arrangement of Providence must have been intended for some end that is upon the whole beneficial, what can be more unreasonable than the complaints we make of the imperfections of our fellow-beings? How common it is for a man to be condemned by his fellows because he has not certain qualities of mind or heart that are diametrically opposed to each other! One man has a gay temper and a dazzling wit, and we wonder that he has not more gravity and judgment; another has a mathematical turn of mind, and we complain of his lack of imagination. We wonder on the one hand, that the active, bustling man gives so little time for reflection, and, on the other, that the thinking man should have such a dislike for action. It is thought strange that the many-sided man, who astonishes us by the multifariousness of his knowledge, should be "superficially omniscient;" and, again, that one who has great power of concentration, and sounds the depth of some subjects, should be so deplorably ignorant of all others. The generous, free-hearted man, whose purse flies open at every appeal of charity, is censured for his lack of economy, and the prudent, saving man for his stinginess and meanness. The honest, conscientious man, who has a stern hatred of vice, shocks us by his roughness and bluntness; while the polished man of the world, who charms us by his courtesies and winning conversation, hardly less displeases us by the light censure with which he visits the wildest aberrations from virtue.

The absurdity of our complaints in each of these cases is so evident as hardly to need comment. We do not complain of the truck-horse that it has not the fleetness of a

racer, or of the race-horse that it has not the endurance of the mule; and yet we are often indignant because a fellow mortal is not somebody else, or does not exhibit qualities which are incompatible with those we admire in him. In youth, especially, are we liable to this error. Enthusiastic and sanguine, we are no sooner captivated by any particular excellence in a character than we immediately give it credit for all others; and we are disgusted beyond reason when we come to discover, as discover we must, the defects in the opposite scale of the balance. The unreasonableness of our expectations will be still more apparent if we consider another obvious fact—that even in the rare cases where a man is endowed by Providence with all the mental and moral faculties in a proximately equal degree, the frequent and habitual exercise of one set of them, so necessary in the division of labor which a complex civilization necessitates, is almost sure to make the other faculties rust or weaken from disuse.

Again, when by strenuous efforts and unceasing vigilance certain virtues have been attained by us, how often do we find, in the very hour of our triumph, some opposite vice peeping out! In vain do we strive, by suppressing every bad tendency, and stimulating every lagging virtue, to attain to an ideal state. In vain do we clip and stretch, reduce and inflate, each of our various endowments, so as to bring all to a level or a match. The plague is, that no sooner have we whipped and goaded some quality into activity, or reined another into repose, than we discover that, like the dog-hating woman, whose husband delighted her by telling her that he had sold his big mastiff for fifty dollars, but afterward explained that he had taken in payment two puppies at twenty-five dollars apiece, we have only exchanged one form of error for another, the golden mean being as remote as ever; or, if we have brought up one faculty or quality to par, another, for lack of due attention, is giving way! As frost,

raised to its utmost intensity, produces the sensation of fire, so any good quality, over-wrought and pushed to excess, turns into its own contrary. Dam up vice in one place, and lo! you will almost find it oozing out in another. After having acted for years upon Poor Richard's maxims of frugality and prudence, we are startled to find that we have become mere worldings and niggards; or we find that we have abandoned one form of indulgence only to give ourselves full license in another. Let the right wing of your moral army be victorious, and chase all opposed to it from the field, and straightway you will find, as did the royalists at Marston Moor, that the left has been disgracefully beaten, and has fled twenty miles to the rear.

We sometimes fancy, when we see a face in which there are some irregularities of feature, that, by slightly varying its lineaments,— by adding a little here, and subtracting there,—we could make it perfect. But could the alterations be made, the result would probably show how inferior to nature's own work is the work of "nature's journeymen." It is altogether probable that the same secret blending of excellence and imperfection in the parts is as essential to the beauty of the whole in the mental and moral man as in the physical. The very discords in our natures, like those in music, may contribute to the general harmony of the effect. As the lily, the emblem of purity, and the lotus-flower, grow out of the mud,—as certain trees shed their precious gums by virtue of a disease, without which the gums would be wanting,—as the pearl, the ornament of beauty, owes its existence to the pain of the wounded oyster,—and as the *pate-de-foie-gras*, which is so delicious to the epicure, owes its excellence to the preternaturally swollen liver of the wretched animal that furnishes it,—so many of our virtues may grow out of a constitutional infirmity or unsoundness, or be connected with a radical vice of character. Our virtues and vices are often stalks from the same root, and, if you uproot the one, you are very liable to pluck up the

other. "The shrub which bears the most beautiful of flowers is that which also bears the keenest of thorns." John Howard, the philanthropist, grudged no toil or sacrifice that would lessen the wretchedness in prisons; but he was either destitute of natural affections, or his zeal for the public good devoured them, for, we are told that he was a tyrant in his own household, and by his neglect suffered his son to fall into dissolute habits which ended in madness. He was the author of a system of solitary confinement, which, no doubt with the best of motives, he recommended in the treatment of refractory boys,—"for which" even the gentle Charles Lamb, recollecting the horrors he had seen at Christ's Hospital, could say, "I could spit on his statue."

Even where there is the most perfect exemption from the common run of vices, there is usually some other enormous one, which, like Aaron's rod, swallows up all the rest. The Duke of Alva, Robespierre, and Napoleon, were much less liable to petty vices than the average mortal. An English essayist tells us that he was acquainted in his younger days with a man who at first seemed superior to every foible whatever, and whom he looked upon as a paragon of self-denial, until he met him one evening at supper, when he found him eating and drinking so enormously, that it was easy to see that gluttony was a moral infirmity which in him had swallowed up or precluded all others. It is no libel to say that some of the ultra advocates of "teetotalism" have Gargantua-like appetites for "links and chitterlings"; they compensate for the banished crystal by the more frequent crockery. While human nature remains unchanged, men will continue, as in the days of Butler, to

> "Compound for sins they are inclined to,
> By damning those they have no mind to."

Again, as there are faces in the individual features of

which no blemish can be found, but which show no positive beauty, so there are persons of faultless character who have no positive virtues. They harm nobody; they never lie, exaggerate, backbite, cheat, or steal; but neither, on the other hand, do they ever do any great good. If they can but attain to this negative excellence, they are "content to dwell in decencies forever." A fellow-traveller of Abraham Lincoln once happily characterized this entire class of men. Riding one night with "old Abe" on the box of a stage-coach, in southern Illinois, he sat for hours in moody silence, puffing away at a cigar, and at last offered one to his companion. Lincoln courteously declined to accept it, saying: "Thank you; I have no 'vices.'" The smoker did not open his lips again for three hours, at the end of which time he "grunted out," as Lincoln says, the following sage observation: "It has ever been my experience that folks that have no vices have plaguey few virtues." Gray, the poet, was a man of this stamp. He wrote a few beautiful poems, one an "entire and perfect chrysolite" which will last forever. But what has he left to justify the opinion of his biographer that he was probably the most learned man, in his day, in Europe? His vast stores of knowledge, instead of being a running fountain to fertilize the wastes of society, appear to have been, for the most part, a stagnant reservoir. Overladen with intellectual wealth, he became over-refined and painfully fastidious by contemplating the models which were perpetually before him. "Too much honey clogged his wings."

> "Ten thousand great ideas filled his mind,
> But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind."

Many an author with glaring faults has done more good to his fellow-beings.

Why is it that we have so little love for "good" people, that there is an undertone of irony in the words "He

is a very good man?" Is it because the world hates goodness, as is sometimes rashly said? Is it because we envy those whom we despair of imitating? No, the true secret of our distaste is, that the virtue of those who are known in society as "good people" springs from a deficiency in their mental and moral organization, not from superior conscientiousness or more heroic conflicts with temptation than other men have known. It is because they are not tempted that they do not fall into sin; and they are never tempted, not because they are above, but because they are beneath, temptation. One must have a certain amount of mental vigor to be strongly tempted; and, therefore, the dull, lazy, passionless, unimaginative man, who has no cravings for forbidden fruit, who has no fancy to paint the charms and delights of unlawful pleasure, is never sorely tried,—hardly imperilled,—and "stands a monument of stupid virtue." This is the reason why we dislike the so-called "good people;" as another has said, "for the same reason that we cannot herd with the inferior animals of the creation, we cannot fraternize with them. We are a little lower than the angels and they are only a very little higher than the brutes. 'It is our weaknesses alone that render us lovable,' says Goethe; and therefore our pleasure is to walk and talk with those who have been 'tried, troubled, and tempted,' —who have enjoyed and suffered like ourselves. We make bosom friends of these, even though they may have sinned and fallen. The beating of a warm though erring heart is dearer to us than the cold and clammy life of the reptile that has ever so long lived imbedded in stone." Did not our Saviour recognize this principle, when he said of an erring woman: "Much is forgiven her because she loved much?"

If the views we have taken are just, it follows that nothing can be more unreasonable than many of the complaints that are made against men of genius, both by critics and moralists. How often is a writer, who has certain

acknowledged excellences, censured because he has not certain others that are inconsistent with them! A wine-drinker does not object to sparkling champagne that it has not the body of old port; yet how often is an author, who charms us by his Addisonian elegance and pleasantry, or by a negligent grace like that of Goldsmith, found fault with because he has not the sententious gravity of Bacon or the pregnant brevity of Butler! A critic who is never tired of extolling the terseness, point, and polish of Landor's style, laments that it has not the pomp, variety, and richness of hue which surprise and delight the reader of De Quincey; and, again, a critic who is in raptures with De Quincey's structural perfection of sentence, and especially with its "blending of rhythmical and impassioned music with a Greek-like propriety of phrase and a logical accuracy of thought," dashes the praise with a regret that the workmanship excels the stuff,—as if anything else were to be expected from a writer endowed so disproportionately with the faculty of expression. Carlyle, without his German compounds, his exaggerations, his ellipses that yawn with chasms wide enough to engulf all thought, would be a more correct and classic writer; but without his mannerism, he would be Carlyle no longer. We cannot have in the same writer Macaulay's champagne-like exhilaration of style, his sparkling antithesis, epigram, and point, and the simplicity of Defoe, or the thoughtful repose of Henry Taylor. We cannot combine the luxuriant fulness of Plato and the elliptic brevity of Aristotle. Livy could no more have written like Tacitus than Rembrandt could have painted like Teniers. The prophet Ezekiel would have wanted his peculiar excellences of style had he possessed those of Isaiah; Paul, without his abrupt transitions, his long parentheses, and his occasional obscurities, would lose some of his most distinctive characteristics.

How common it is to see great conceptions in a book or a painting marred by weakness of expression, or

strength of expression squandered on poor conceptions How often does a Haydon fail to embody ideals to th height of which a Lawrence or a Reynolds, with all hi mastery of expression, could never rise! The styles o Hooker and Butler fall as much below their best though as those of William Melmoth and Alexander Smith towe above their highest ideas. As we have already shown the very gifts of a writer have a disqualifying tendency so that every advantage he enjoys is accompanied with a corresponding loss. How many artists are cramped and weighted by an undue development of the critical faculty which yet is absolutely indispensable to any high attainment! Critical insight and creative power are not necessarily foes, for a broad basis of spiritual sympathy underlies them both; but so rarely are they united in the same mind, and especially at the same moment, that they may be regarded as practically incompatible. A late writer justly observes that though a due proportion and balance of gifts wonderfully enhance their value, yet proportion and balance are themselves a disqualification in some directions. The very unrest and dissatisfaction of an ill-balanced mind give it a certain impetus, which is wanting to the more harmoniously constituted. What painter has more glaring faults than Rubens? and yet, what painter surpasses him in compass and variety of artistic power? Strange to say, there was a weakness even in his strength; for even amid his inexhaustible fruitfulness Sir Joshua Reynolds recognised one smooth, flat face continually recurring. Mrs. Stowe, in her book of travel, speaks of him as "the great, joyous, full-souled, all-powerful Rubens; full of triumphant, abounding life; disgusting and pleasing; making me laugh, and making me angry; defying me to dislike him; dragging me at his chariot-wheels; in despite of my protests, forcing me to confess there was no other but he. Like Shakespeare, he forces you to accept and forgive a thousand excesses, and uses his own faults as musicians use discords, only to enhance the perfection

of harmony." She adds: "There is certainly some use even in defects. A faultless style sends you to sleep. Defects arouse and excite the sensibility to seek excellences. Some of Shakespeare's finest passages explode all grammar like sky-rockets; the thought blows the language to shivers."

As with their literary faults, so with the moral flaws and blemishes of men of genius; they are often reprehended when, perhaps, a profound consideration of their constitution would lead us to doubt whether their strong points and their weak ones are not inseparably blended. That which was said of a certain philosopher, that if he had not erred he would have done less *(si non errasset fecerat ille minus)*, must often be said of other men. Whether genius be or be not a disease, as some affirm it to be, it is certain that it is often attended with some constitutional infirmity to which it seems closely allied. Nature, for some reason, seems often to take a cruel delight in spoiling her fairest handiwork, yoking together the most opposite gifts and qualities, mingling strength and weakness, wisdom and foolishness, strangely together, like the notes of "bells that are jangled and out of tune." Alexander Pope, "the little wasp of Twickenham," had a constitutional irritability which involved him in incessant warfare with the small wits and poets of his time; yet who can doubt that this very irritability of temper was closely connected with, if not an essential part of, the exquisite genius which charms us in the "Rape of the Lock" and the "Essay on Man?" We deplore the misanthropy, coarseness, and virulence of Swift; but we are too apt to forget that, had he been a model of clerical decorum, that masterpiece of satire, the "Tale of a Tub," would have remained unwritten. We deplore, again, the fierce passions of Burns, which hurried him into so many excesses, and caused an early extinction of his genius; yet who can say that the "fiery sleet" of thought and sentiment that drives along in Burns's page, and the headlong fervors which hurried

him over the brink of moral propriety, had not some common root, so that, had we been spared the contemplation of his errors, we might also have lost the enjoyment of his songs? Travellers say that on the sides of volcanoes, in the cool crust of what was once red-hot lava, can be found luxuriant vines, bending with grapes of the most delicious flavor; and so in the soul of Burns, convulsed by volcanic passions, flourished and thrived some of the noblest and tenderest sentiments of humanity. We lament, as we read the impassioned verse of Byron, that his life should have been spent in chasing all the Protean forms of pleasure, only to find the subtle essence escape as soon as grasped, leaving but the languor and satiety of the jaded voluptuary; yet who cannot see that his elemental force, his vehement sensibility, his Rubens-like facility of touch, and the sensuous melody of his verse, together with his wit, manly sense, and knowledge of the world,—in short all his leading qualities as a poet,—are intimately allied to that egotism and unrest, that contempt for public opinion and the conventional maxims of society, which led him fearlessly to attempt to solve the problem of life in his own way, and to show by his discomfiture the misery of him who lives for self, and drains the cup of pleasure to its dregs? Sir Walter Scott was ruined by his ambition for baronial honors; but was not this weakness the same peculiarity of mind which, by interesting him in the customs and manners of antiquity, and filling his writings with mediæval allusion, enabled him, as the "Wizard of the North," to charm the civilized world?

Again, how common, yet how unreasonable, is the complaint made against authors, that they do not fully exemplify in their lives the precepts they enforce in their writings! In making the acquaintance of a writer whose printed page has stiffened our moral backbone and flooded our whole spiritual being with energy,—who has filled our souls with a noble scorn of all baseness and meanness, and animated us with an earnest determination to "quit our-

selves like men" in all the relations of life,—we expect, as the merest matter of course, a second and even greater influx of that invigorating power. We think that the teaching conveyed before in words will be repeated now in a more impressive form, and that he who has pointed us to ideals glimmering above us in radiance and beauty like Alpine summits, must himself be qualified to guide us along the rocky paths, and by the yawning precipices that intervene between us and those serene heights; that he who has "allured to brighter worlds" will himself "lead the way." We might,—as another has well said,—as well expect him to have strong legs, because he has keen sight. We forget that speculative and practical ability are too distinct kinds of talent, which are combined in very unequal proportions; that though both are forms of mental power, yet one no more implies the other than dexterity in feats of legerdemain implies the art of leaping a five-barred gate, or of "witching the world with noble horsemanship," though these are all instances of physical skill. Again it is evident that a man's writings may impoverish his life; that he may put all his good things into the one, and leave none for the other, just as a man may expend his fortune in dress, and starve his body and mind. While other men have had the whole energy of their nature to throw into action, his has been already drained when he leaves his study and enters the world. The force which they have expended in deeds he has expended in originating and uttering the moral ideas which have been their trumpet-call to duty, and enough has not remained to work these ideas into his own life.

The remarks we have made about literary men of genius apply with equal force to great reformers. How often do we hear it lamented that a Luther, a Knox, or a Garrison, when attacking the wicked institutions or well-fortified abuses of his time, is not more temperate and charitable in his language! Would he be equally strenuous and energetic, without indulging in such vehemence

and coarseness of denunciation, he would be a pattern re
former. The critic does not perceive that without tha
fierceness of spirit which leads to such excesses, the re
former would be incapable of performing the tremendou
tasks he undertakes. Broad-axes cannot have the delicat
edge of razors. A man may possibly be, as Heine says o
Luther, at the same time a dreamy mystic and a practica
man of action,—a scholastic word-thresher and an inspired
God-intoxicated prophet; but he cannot be, at the same
moment, "as wild as the storm that uproots the oak, and
gentle as the zephyr that dallies with the violet." I
often happens in this world that as De Maistre says, "a
sufficiency does not suffice" *(ce qui suffit ne suffit pas)*
and, as he adds, we are never sure of our moral qualities, til
we have learned to give them a little exaltation. If a
person attempts to throw you down, it is not enough to
stiffen up against him; you must strike him and make
him recoil. To clear a ditch, you must look beyond the
farther edge, if you would not tumble in. In like manner,
he who would batter down any mighty evil, any strong
fortress of superstition or error, must not nicely calculate
the amount of force to be used; he must deal the heaviest
blows in his power. The men by whom the world has
been most benefited have usually been men of strong passions and broad social sympathies. These passions and
sympathies lead them into many errors and excesses; but
we must take the evil with the good, nor quarrel with the
winds that give life and freshness to the intellect, though
they sometimes swell into a storm or even a hurricane.
Gentleness, moderation and courtesy are excellent qualities
in themselves; but to suppose them in a sturdy, thoroughgoing reformer, is to suppose an intellectual paradox,—
a moral monster,—a being born under the contending influences of Mercury and Saturn. As an able writer has
said: "There is but one alternative in the matter. Either
the rudeness of reformers must be tolerated for the sake
of the necessary boldness, or the boldness must be wanted

also, and the work remain unperformed. It is here as in the ordinary walks of life: we must not expect butchers to be men of exquisitely sensitive and refined feelings, nor scavengers to have the squeamishness or delicacy of gentlemen. Those who bewail the want of soft and courteous qualities in a Luther, might as reasonably expect to see the hurricane pause in its tremendous but perhaps necessary mission, in order to waft a pleasure bark across some fairy lake, or fan the cheek of beauty in her rosy bower."

Fat vs. Lean.

AMONG the witty passages in the writings of the late Henry Giles is a panegyric upon fat men, of whom he may be considered the laureate. There is something cordial, he asserts, in a fat man. Everybody likes him, and he likes everybody. He is a living, walking minister of gratitude to the bounty of the earth and the fulness thereof; an incarnate testimony against the vanities of care; a radiant manifestation of the wisdom of good humor. A fat man, almost in virtue of being fat, is, *per se*, a popular man; he has an abundance of rich juices, and, the hinges of his system being well oiled and his springs noiseless, he goes on his way rejoicing, full of contentment and placidity. A fat man, it is argued again, feels his position solid; "he knows that his being is *cognizable;* he knows that he has a marked place in the universe, and that he need take no extraordinary pains to advertise to mankind that he is among them. He knows that he is in no danger of being overlooked. A fat man has also the decided advantage of being the nearest to that most perfect of figures, a mathematical sphere, while a thin man approximates to a simple line. Moreover, a fat man is a being of harmonious volume, and holds relations to the material universe in every direction, while the thin man has nothing but length,—is, in fact, but *the continuation of a point.*"

All this is well put, and the logic, so far as it goes, is without a flaw; but the argument is like a jug-handle, all on one side. Obesity, as well as leanness, has its disadvantages. Who pays the largest bills to his tailor, and requires the most time to dress and undress, to go to sleep

or to wake up all over? Which, when in a hurry, has the advantage,—the man who lugs about a load of flesh, like Atlas carrying the globe upon his shoulders, or he who, composed of skin and bones only, darts from place to place with the agility of a grasshopper? Who, in a crowded church or lecture-room, is squeezed the hardest, and who suffers most from hydrostatic pressure in a horse-car? Whose sides are grazed by narrow doorways, and who in war presents the biggest mark to the bullets of the enemy? Who tumbles from stage-coaches or rolls down staircases or precipices with the greatest momentum; and who is refused admission into light or loaded vehicles? True, the fat man is warmest in winter: but though he may crow over his thin neighbor in January, see him under the sweltering heats of dog-days, when "the whirligig of time has brought around its revenges,"—how he puffs, and blows, and "lards the lean earth as he walks along"! You no longer hear the merry chuckle with which in winter he cried out to his thin neighbor, "Away, you starveling; you eel-skin; you dried neat's tongue; you stock-fish!" Gladly would he now exchange the mountain of flesh which he trundles along for the ghost-like anatomy of his neighbor. No doubt the fat man is more *visible* than the lean man. It is hard, sometimes, for the fleshless man to convince the world that he is somebody; that he is an actual entity, a positive substance, as well as his corpulent fellow-creature. There is a full abstract admission of his equality; he counts as a soul in population returns and paragraphs about accidents, the same as the fat man; he is the same in the eye of the law, pays the same taxes, has alike his epitaph and elegy. But the fat man has only to appear, and the poor fellow is absolutely lost in the obscurity of the fat man's shadow. "The fat man has only to speak, and he drowns the treble squeal of his fleshless brother in the depths of his bass, as the full swell of an organ overpowers the whistle of a penny trumpet."

But how is it in times of danger? Who is it that, if shy or sensitive, finds it impossible to escape observation? Who, when hunted by a detective, tries in vain to crawl through small holes, or to stow himself in a cranny or snug hiding-place? Who, serving on juries, shrinks and shrivels till he can hardly recognise his own identity,—beginning the term with two hundred avoirdupois, and ending it with a lightness that can hardly turn a money-scale? It is another great disadvantage of the fat man that he lacks spirituality. The man who is fat bodily is apt to be lean intellectually. A corpulent intellectualist is, in fact, a contradiction in terms,—a palpable catachresis. You might as well talk of a brick balloon, a sedentary will-o'-the-wisp, a pot-bellied spirit, or a lazy lightning. In gross, carneous bodies, the thinking principle is buried under a mountain of flesh, like Enceladus under Ætna. The spirit is apt to be like a little fish in a large frying-pan of fat, which is either totally absorbed or tastes of nothing but the lard. No great deeds are ever done by fat men. They are too sluggish to set the world on fire. It is your spare, spiritualized beings,—men who can distinctly feel and reckon their own ribs,—men in whom the fiery soul has o'erinformed its integument of clay,—that stir up revolutions, and set whole nations by the ears.

Alexander was a spare man, and so was Cæsar. Bonaparte was thin as long as he climbed the ladder; Nelson was a shadow; Suwarrow was a spectre; the Duke of Wellington offered only an edge to his enemy, and had hardly oil enough in his whole composition to keep his joints from creaking. Gregory the Seventh, the mightiest of the Popes, was of diminutive size; and so was Robespierre, one of the master-spirits of the French Revolution, who by his force of will "ruled the whirlwind and directed the storm" longer than any of his rivals. Lewis the Fourteenth, who passed for a large man in his life-time, was considerably under the average size, and Napoleon

the Third was really, as Hugo termed him, "Napoleon the Little," being but little more than five feet high. Athanasius, who triumphed over the tall Arius at the Council of Nice, and by his intellectual might and combativeness suggested the proverb, "*Athanasius contra mundum*," was rather a dwarf than a man. Dr. Watts; Pope, the "little crooked thing that asked questions;" Chillingworth, the giant polemic; Montaigne, the prince of essayists; and Scarron, who called himself "an abridgment of human miseries,"—were all small men. Of Sidney Godolphin, Lord Clarendon says: "There was never so great a mind and spirit contained in so little room." Alexander Hamilton was slender and below the average height; the brave General Marion was short and lean; and Dr. Kane, who surpassed all his companions in braving torrid heat and polar cold, was but five feet six in height and weighed but 135 pounds. Burton, in his "Anatomy," tells us that Uladislaus Cubitatis, "that pigmy king of Poland," who reigned about A. D. 1306, fought more victorious battles than any of his long-shanked predecessors; and he adds; "*Nullum virtus respuit staturam* (virtue refuseth no stature); and commonly your great, vast bodies and fine features are sottish, dull, and leaden spirits. What's in them? *Quid nisi pondus iners stolidæque ferveia mentis.* What in Osus and Ephialtes (Neptune's sons in Homer), nine acres long? What in Maximinus, Ajax, Caligula, and the rest of those great Zanzimmins, or gigantical Anakims, heavy, vast, barbarous lubbers?

Were our country at war with another, who would not prefer, for commander-in-chief, a lean, fiery Andrew Jackson, prompt as a hair-trigger pistol, to a Daniel-Lambert-like warrior,—a huge mountain of flesh in whom the *vis inertiæ* overpowers all the other forces of his nature? It is the thin blade that pierces deepest, and the lean horse generally wins the race. "What care I for the bulk of a man?" says the candid fat Falstaff. "Give me the spirit,

Master Shallow,—I say, give me the spirit." "Nothing fat," says a writer, "ever yet enlightened the world; for, even in a tallow-candle, the illumination proceeds from the wick." Shakespeare holds the same doctrine:

> Fat paunches make lean pates; and dainty bits
> Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits."

Again, not only are all heroic deeds impossible by a fat man, but it is equally hard to associate sentiment with obesity. Who can think without a smile of a fat man in love? Who ever read without merriment the story of Gibbon, the fat historian of the Roman Empire, going down on his knees to make love, and finding it impossible to get up till the lady rang the bell for the footman to help him? On the other hand, it should be remembered to their credit that fat men are almost invariably kind-hearted and of a forgiving spirit. Never do you find them cherishing spite and studying schemes of vengeance; never writing carping criticisms, or joining secret associations for attacking their fellow-workmen or shooting emperors. The very faults of fat men are of a kind that awaken sympathy rather than anger. As Falstaff said of himself, they "have more flesh than other men, therefore more frailty."

On the whole, the advantages and disadvantages of both fatness and leanness are so nearly balanced that we may consider the discussion a drawn game. There are extreme cases on record, both of obesity and leanness, either of which would give us pause were we compelled to choose between them. One would not care to be so fat that other persons would slip down by just treading on his shadow; nor would he care to be so lean that he could not himself cast a shadow. There are few of us so partial to pinguitude that we would covet a wife as big as the Yankee's, who complained that he could not embrace her all at once, but was obliged to make a chalk-

mark at the *ultima thule* of his caresses, and then begin again where he had left off. On the other hand, there is an extreme of leanness which is hardly less undesirable. Jeffrey, the reviewer, was so thin that Sydney Smith declared that "he has not body enough to cover his mind decently with; his intellect is improperly exposed." Falstaff tells of an acquaintance of his who was such a dagger of lath, that you "might have trussed him and all his apparel into an eel-skin; the case of a treble hautboy was a mansion for him and court." A story is told of a poor diminutive Frenchman, who, being ordered by his Sangrado to drink a quart of pitsan daily, replied, with a heavy sigh, "Alas! doctor, that is impossible, for *I hold only a pint!*" The Duke de Choiseul was so meagre a man, that, when he came to London to negotiate a peace, Charles Townshend, being asked if the French Government had sent the preliminaries of a treaty, replied: "I do not know; but they have sent me *the outline of an ambassador.*" Still more remarkable was the leanness of a French priest, who lived many years ago. Shrivelling up more and more daily, he became at last so thin and dry in his articulations, that he was unable to go through the celebration of mass, as his joints and spine would crack in so loud and strange a manner at every genuflection, that the faithful were terrified, and the faithless laughed. This story may be regarded as "too thin" for belief; we admit that it is the "*knee* plus ultra" of its class.

Per contra, it is on record that a Frenchwoman was so fat that she took fire. An old chronicler tells us of a French princess who was afflicted with such an excess of pinguitude that she melted after she was embalmed. A lady was once spoken of in Sydney Smith's presence, who was so inordinately stout that he declared that "were she to rise in revolt against the constituted authorities, it would be necessary to read the Riot Act and disperse her!" Gross as were the dimensions of these monsters of

humanity, they are all eclipsed by the fatty fame of a Russian girl of Bolschin-Grodna, in the Government of Tula, who, when she was but ten years old, turned the scale at 418 pounds. With an apparently instinctive prevision of her future proportions, her sponsors at her baptism christened her Fatinitza. Motley, in his history of the Dutch Republic, speaks of an officer in the Spanish army in the Netherlands,—one Chiapin Vitelli,—equally distinguished for his courage, his corpulence, and his cruelty,—who had a stomach so protuberant that it was always supported in a bandage suspended from his neck. Yet, in spite of this enormous impediment, he was personally active on the battle-field, and did more service, not only as a commander, but as a subaltern, than many a younger and lighter man. It was an awful hour for the Dutch when he *fell* upon his enemies! Cases like this must be regarded as exceptions to the general rule of leanness in military heroes. If Vitelli's face was proportional to his stomach, he must have been as unpleasant to look at in a hot day as the English grazier who distressed Judge Park. It is said that on a smoking hot day, at the assizes in a country town, the grazier planted himself in front of the judge, and sat there perspiring and wiping his face until his honor could bear the sight no longer. Throwing down his pen, he called out: "Fat man, do get out of the way; you make one hot to look at you."

When the late Dixon H. Lewis, who weighed 360 pounds, represented Alabama in Congress, he was nominated by Prentice, of the Louisville Journal, for the Presidency on the ground that he was the *weightiest* man in the House, and would *fill* the Presidential chair as it been filled by none of his predecessors. To this it was replied that, though he unquestionably overshadowed all his competitors, yet it was impossible that such a colossus of *roads* could *run well* for the Presidency. Even England, prolific as she has been of great men, has produced few leviathans like Lewis. She can boast, however, of one

adipose phenomenon more stupendous than even he; we refer to Sir John Potter, who in 1858 succeeded Mr. Bright in the House of Commons as the representative of Manchester, and who weighed (on the hay-scale, we suppose) 450 pounds! A London editor, in speaking of his face, said that it reminded him of Milton's description of Satan's shield, which, with the change of a single word, is an admirable picture of Sir John's phiz:

> ——"The broad circumference
> Stands on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
> Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views."

It is one of the preëminent glories of England that she knows how to utilize her sons who thus "tallow in the caul," as we see in this case and in that one of Edwards, who lived long ago in Oxford:

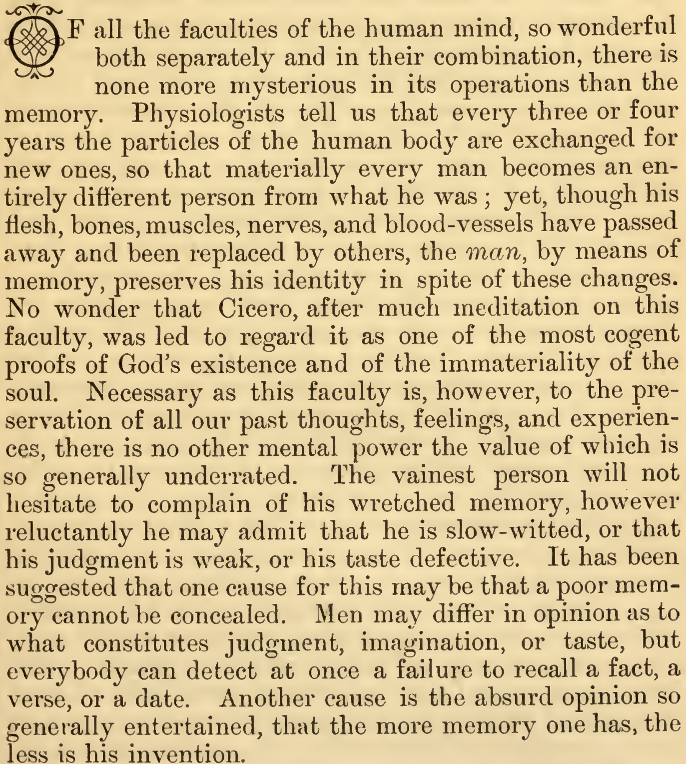
> "When Edwards walks the streets, the paviors cry
> 'God bless you, sir!' and lay their rammers by."

It is said that one wonderful property of the Krenzbrunnen waters in Bohemia is their power to reduce the "too, too solid flesh," and hence resort to it hundreds who, afflicted with excessive bulkiness, would diminish their burden. "At one time," says a traveller, "we counted seventeen fat men there sitting in an unbroken row, a sight to upset any unprepared nerves!" It is fortunate for such persons that corpulence is not treated by modern states as a crime, as it was by the ancient Spartans. The latter, according to a late writer,* took charge of the firmness and looseness of men's flesh, and actually regulated the degree of fatness to which it was lawful, in a free state, for any citizen to plump out his body. Those who had the audacity to grow too fat or too soft for military exercise and the service of Sparta, were soundly whipped.

* Bruce's "Historic and Classic Portraits."

In one particular instance, that of Nauclis, the son of Polytus, the offender was brought before the Ephori at a meeting of all the people of Sparta, at which his unlawful fatness was publicly exposed; and he was threatened with perpetual banishment if he did not bring his body within the regular Spartan compass, and give up his culpable mode of living,—which was declared to be more worthy of an Ionian than of a son of Lacedæmon.

Memory and its Marvels.



OF all the faculties of the human mind, so wonderful both separately and in their combination, there is none more mysterious in its operations than the memory. Physiologists tell us that every three or four years the particles of the human body are exchanged for new ones, so that materially every man becomes an entirely different person from what he was; yet, though his flesh, bones, muscles, nerves, and blood-vessels have passed away and been replaced by others, the *man*, by means of memory, preserves his identity in spite of these changes. No wonder that Cicero, after much meditation on this faculty, was led to regard it as one of the most cogent proofs of God's existence and of the immateriality of the soul. Necessary as this faculty is, however, to the preservation of all our past thoughts, feelings, and experiences, there is no other mental power the value of which is so generally underrated. The vainest person will not hesitate to complain of his wretched memory, however reluctantly he may admit that he is slow-witted, or that his judgment is weak, or his taste defective. It has been suggested that one cause for this may be that a poor memory cannot be concealed. Men may differ in opinion as to what constitutes judgment, imagination, or taste, but everybody can detect at once a failure to recall a fact, a verse, or a date. Another cause is the absurd opinion so generally entertained, that the more memory one has, the less is his invention.

A recent writer says that "if a man have a great memory,—if his memory be prodigious in any sense,—it will always be found to surpass his other powers." This state-

ment is contradicted by a hundred biographies. Though a defective memory is not, as Quintilian declares, demonstrative proof of the lack of genius, yet nearly all the great men that have ever lived have had remarkable memories. So far from the intellectual powers being, as is so often asserted, in inverse proportion to the strength and tenacity of this faculty, the very reverse is usually true. No memory can be universal, but just in proportion to its strength and many-sidedness will be found the vigor of the other faculties, and the force with which they can be brought to bear upon the affairs of life. Memory is the main fountain of thought; as Burke says, "there is no faculty of the mind which can bring its energies into effect unless the memory be stored with ideas for it to work upon." Hence it is that this faculty, by a wise provision of Providence, is developed in advance of the reasoning powers, so that when the latter begin to assert themselves, there may be material stored up for their use. What is an author without a good memory? We talk of "creative" minds; but this is only a figure of speech, for man can create nothing,—he can only select and combine. Genius, it is true, lights its own fire, but not till it has collected materials to feed the flame. When a man writes a book, however original, he draws the materials from his own recollections and experiences. Hence the ancients called Memory the mother of the Muses. *Tantum ingenii, quantum memoriæ.* What is a statesman or a politician without a great memory? A political leader is continually called upon for feats of memory. Not only must he distinctly remember the leading events of his country's history and much of the history of other countries, political, religious, social, financial, but he must have an exact memory of names and dates, and a verbal memory to quote promptly and accurately. He must be able to recall all the leading points and facts of an opponent's speech, and at the same time to adhere to the preconcerted plan of his own reply; and all this must be done with clear-

ness and distinctness, and without hesitation, boggling, or stammering. The weight of Sir Robert Peel as a speaker was owing not more to his argumentative ability than to the extraordinary fulness and accuracy with which he would state the arguments of his opponents in the order of their succession.

That memory, like muscular force, may occasionally exist, though rarely, without being accompanied by any corresponding superiority of the other faculties, is doubtless true. There are men whose memories, instead of being selective and retaining only what is nutritious and helpful,—the things for which they have an intellectual affinity, and which are related to their own individuality (if they can be said to have any), retain important facts and trivialities,—things related and things unrelated to their own personality,—with equal tenacity. They read a newspaper article, a poem, or a story, and it is at once daguerreotyped on the memory. They go upon a journey, and years afterward all its minutest incidents are faithfully treasured. Never ruminating upon what they read, they retain their knowledge undigested and unassimilated, and it affords no more nutriment to their minds than the flour to the barrel which contains it. Who has not been bored a thousand times by men with such memories? Who has not met with encyclopedias on legs, packed full of learning on a great variety of subjects, but learning unassimilated, without method or system, and made up of information the most trivial as well as the most valuable? Who has not listened "with sad civility" to more than one person like the Count of Coigny described by Talleyrand, who "possesses wit and talent, but his conversation is fatiguing, because his memory is equally exact in quoting the date of the death of Alexander the Great, and that of the Princess de Guéménée's poodle?" Lord Bolingbroke has given a vivid picture of a scholar of his acquaintance who was an omnivorous reader, and joined a prodigious memory of this kind to a prodigious industry.

"He had read almost constantly," says Bolingbroke, "twelve or fourteen hours a day, for five-and-twenty or thirty years, and had heaped together as much learning as could be crowded into one head. In the course of my acquaintance with him I consulted him once or twice, not oftener; for I found this mass of learning of as little use to me as to the owner. This man was communicative enough; but nothing was distinct in his mind. How could it be otherwise? he had never spared time to think, all was employed in reading. His reason had not the merit of common mechanism. When you press a watch or pull a clock, they answer your question with precision; for they repeat exactly the hour of the day, and tell you neither more nor less than you desire to know. But when you asked this man a question, he overwhelmed you by pouring forth all that the several terms or words of your question recalled to his memory; and if he omitted anything, it was that very thing to which the sense of the whole question should have led him and confined him. To ask him a question was to wind up a spring in his memory, that rattled on with vast rapidity and confused noise till the force of it was spent, and you went away with all the noise in your ears, stunned and uninformed. I never left him, that I was not ready to say to him, *Dieu vous fasse la grace de devenir moins savant!* 'God grant you the favor of becoming less learned.'" Such men, deriving little nutriment from their reading, are never men of originality or power. The great vice of our educational systems to-day is that in our schools and colleges too high an estimate is placed upon a literal and formal memory, which receives only as boxes and drawers receive what is put into them. That student is too often regarded as the best scholar who has succeeded best in cramming for an examination, or who has answered most correctly the questions upon the text-books, without regard to the degree in which he has assimilated his intellectual pabulum, and turned his knowledge into faculty. In master-

ing any branch of knowledge time is an important element. A period must elapse sufficiently long for the formation of mental associations between the newly acquired information and that previously possessed, so that the new ideas may be linked with the old by suggesting chains. No new knowledge can be called our own till we have so meditated upon it, and turned it over and over in the mind, that it not only is added to the old, but interpenetrates it, so that the old can scarcely come into the "sphere of consciousness" without bringing the new with it. "To know by heart," says Montaigne, "is not to know."

Memory varies largely, not only in degree, but in kind. "There is a memory of a heart, of the soul, of the reason, of the sense," and few excel in each. Some persons remember the substance of what they read, but not the words; others can inundate you with quotations, but remember little of their sense. Henry Clay could never repeat a verse of poetry correctly, but rarely forgot an argument, or a name, or a face. There is a celebrated metaphysician in this country, who retains proper names with such difficulty that it is said that if he has a speech to make in which they occur, he is obliged to write them on a slip of paper, and carry it in his vest pocket for reference while he is making his harangue. Great lawyers recollect principles only; exact lawyers recollect cases, and can repeat decisions by the hour in the very words of the books. The former make the best advocates, the latter the best judges. One man will remember distinctly combinations of sounds, but not of colors; another will remember figures and dates, but not principles, arguments, and reasons. There are hotel clerks who, with poor memories of other things, recognise instantly the features of any guest they have once seen. It was said of Addison's daughter who died in 1797, that "she inherited her father's memory, but none of the discriminating powers of his understanding; with the retentive powers of Jedediah Buxton, she was incapable of speaking or writing an

intelligible sentence." Dr. Leyden, the friend of Sir Walter Scott, could repeat an Act of Parliament after one perusal; but he had no power of analysis, and could recover a passage or sentence only by going back to the beginning.

Say, in the introduction to his "Political Economy," tells us that he studied all the books he could find relating to his theme, and then took time to forget what he had read, before beginning to write. The practice of Say suggests the question whether one thoroughly comprehends what his memory retains in the gross. Are facts ever properly generalized, digested, and assimilated,—made part and parcel of the mind,—incorporated chemically, not by contact, but by solution,—till they are, in a great degree, forgotten? No invariable rule can be laid down on this subject, for though generally those who can repeat with perfect accuracy the language of what they read are apt to forget the substance, yet there are many striking instances to the contrary. Mark Pattison, in his life of Milton, says that he could repeat Homer almost all without book, and then strangely adds that Milton's "was not a verbal memory," and that psychologically the power of imagination and the power of verbal memory are almost always found in inverse proportion." If Milton could almost repeat Homer by heart, it is hard to see how he could do it without an exceedingly tenacious verbal memory; and it is equally hard to see what antagonism there can be between verbal memory and imagination, Alike in literature and in art memory is the very lifeblood of the imagination, which droops and dies when the veins are empty. As Sir Joshua Reynolds has said: "Genius may anticipate the season of maturity; but, in the education of a people, as in that of an individual, memory must be exercised before the powers of reason and fancy can be expanded; nor may the artist hope to equal or surpass, till he has learned to imitate, the works of his predecessors." It is impossible, as we have already

seen, for a man to be a great writer or speaker without a great memory; and it must have, besides other qualities, that of being a verbal one. Hundreds of passages in Milton's poems are paraphrases or literal translations of passages in the Greek and Latin poets, and his English words are often used in the sense of the classic words from which they are derived. His wealth of allusion, the passages in Paradise Lost which are little more than a muster-roll of celebrated names, and his diction, which Mr. Pattison says is the elaborated outcome of the best words of all antecedent poetry,—all contradict the idea that Milton had not a verbal memory. Probably, as a late critic has suggested, Milton's memory of words was as strong as Magliabecchi's; but he had faculties in addition, which the bookworm had not. A verbal memory, when the memory is not merely verbal, is a valuable gift. The power of repeating long passages of prose, or beautiful lines of verse whose cadence delights the ear, is not only a pleasant social feat of memory, but is a source of amusement in the intervals of care, in solitude, or in making journeys, and is a help to a young writer in forming his style. It is a pity that such selections are so rarely committed to memory in these days. If judiciously made, they may become, as Ruskin says, "fairy palaces of beautiful thoughts, bright fancies, satisfied memories, noble histories, faithful sayings, treasure-houses of precious and restful thoughts which care cannot disturb, nor pain make gloomy nor poverty take away from us,—houses built without hands, for our souls to dwell in." It has been justly said that an appropriate prose quotation, led up to by chance, is a pleasant surprise that one does not forget. "The more ordinary feat of this memory," says an English essayist "is that of retaining the exact words, whether spoken or written, of what has been neatly or pungently expressed. A good deal of something very like wit itself lies in an apt verbatim reproduction of the wit and humor of other men."

We speak sometimes of the caprices of memory, which is only another term for our ignorance of its laws. There is no other faculty of the mind which is so inexplicable in its operations. Why the most vivid impressions should be so utterly obliterated, and then, as if by an enchanter's wand, spring suddenly to light, is a mystery which baffles the attempts of the acutest metaphysicians to explain it. Who has not again and again been vexed by forgetting a perfectly familiar quotation, fact, or name, and afterward found it flash upon him in the most unexpected way, when he was thinking of something altogether different? How often, after having been silenced by Jones or Brown in controversy, do we recall a few minutes too late that fact or argument which would have pulverized him! How many persons, like Artemus Ward, have the gift of oratory, but "haven't it about them" when it is wanted! Charles James Fox was once carving at a dinner party on the Continent, when he suddenly startled the company by crying out "Gorcum! Gorcum!" It was the name of a town which he could not recollect in conversation an hour before. So familiar is the phenomenon,—so often has the missing idea, for which we racked our brains in vain, come back all at once into the mind, "delivered like a prepaid parcel laid at the door of consciousness,"—that we are accustomed in similar straits to say: "Never mind the missing name (or whatever else we wish to recall) will come to me by and by;" and, as Miss F. P. Cobbe says, "we deliberately turn away, not intending finally to abandon the pursuit, but precisely as if we were possessed of an obedient secretary or librarian, whom we could order to hunt up a missing document or turn out a word in a dictionary, while we amused ourselves with something else." It is probable that no impression made upon the mind, at least no deep impression, ever wholly dies. The brain is a palimpsest, on which, though new impressions are written over old ones imperfectly rubbed out, the effaced writing may at any time reappear.

It is a blessed provision of this *thesaurus omnium rerum*, as Cicero calls it, that the memory treasures pleasing impressions more easily than those that are painful; that it preserves the roses of life, and casts away the thorns. The happy events of our lives, beautiful scenery we have gazed upon, exquisite music to which we have listened, hours of delicious converse with friends, we can recall with more or less vividness; but of bodily pain, or of the vexations and perplexities of life, however keenly we suffered at the time, we have only a general and hazy remembrance. Great calamities, especially, seem to have a stunning effect upon the mind, so that the impressions they make are blunted, and cannot be accurately remembered. Old men, who recall with keen delight the games and pranks of their school-boy days, appear to have almost forgotten how irksome they found the drudgery of learning, how they rebelled against the restraints imposed upon their liberty, and how much they suffered from the bullies of the school.

Among the curious phenomena of memory one of the most striking is its connection with isolated impressions on particular senses. M. Huc, the traveler, says that if he were dropped from the clouds with his eyes bandaged, and fell in any part of China, he should instantly know it by the smell. We have read of an Englishman who said that nothing brought his childhood before him so vividly as the smell of the London mud, which used to come in the windows of his father's house when the crossing-sweepers cleaned the street, and collected the mud in the neighboring gutter. These facts enable us to form some idea of the way in which dogs and horses identify each other by means of their noses. Still more remarkable than these phenomena are the effects produced upon the memory by injuries to the brain. Many instances are recorded of persons who, in consequence of severe hurts on the head, have lost all their mental acquisitions, and been compelled to learn the alphabet again, like children. By a fall from

his horse an Englishman lost his knowledge of Greek, bu
retained his other acquirements ; in like manner a youn
man in Northern New York, being kicked over the le
eye by a horse, forgot all his attainments in Latin. D
Carpenter, in his "Mental Physiology," gives an accour
of a dissenting minister in England, who preached on Sur
day the same sermon which he had preached in the sam
pulpit on the Sunday before. He also gave out the sam
hymn, read the same lessons, and directed his *extempo*
prayer in the same channel. When he came down fro
the pulpit, it was found that he had not the slightest re
membrance of having gone through the same service o
the previous Sunday. A writer in the "Bibliotheca Sacra
tells of an author who wrote a work in defence of
theory, and twenty years after wrote a treatise in oppos
tion to it, citing and refuting its arguments in successio
forgetting all the while that he was the original author t
whom he had become the antagonist. Dr. Broussonnet,
European, found, after recovery from an attack of apo
plexy, that he had utterly lost the ability to write or pro
nounce proper names, or any substantive, though hi
memory abounded in adjectives. In speaking of any pe
son, he designated him by calling him "red" or "tall," ac
cording to the color of his hair or his stature. Ther
have been persons who, after some injury to the brai
could recollect only the first syllable of the words the
used ; others have confounded different substantives, cal
ing a watch a *hat*, and coals *paper*. Sometimes a perso
may be able to *spell* his wants, though he cannot speal
the word, asking (for example) for b, r, e, a, d. There i
an account given of a British captain who, whilst givin
orders on the quarter-deck of his ship at the battle of th
Nile, was struck on the head by a shot, and immediatel
became senseless. For fifteen months after his removal t
Greenwich Hospital he shewed no sign of intelligence
He was then trephined, when consciousness at once re
turned, and he immediately began busying himself to se

the orders executed which he had given during the battle fifteen months ago. The clock-work of the brain, unaware that it had stopped, pointed, when set going again, to the exact minute it had last marked. These sudden revivals of a lost intelligence, it has been happily said, "almost rival in their dramatic effect the result of the prince's advent in the palace of the 'Sleeping Beauty,' where at the magic of a kiss, the inmates of the royal household, who had gone to sleep for a hundred years, transfixed in their old attitudes, leaped suddenly into life and motion, as though they had only for a moment slept."

A celebrated woman, to whom one proposed to teach an art of memory, replied: "I should rather learn the art of forgetting." Those who deplore the feebleness of their memories little dream of the heavy penalty which the man with a tenacious memory pays for his gift. What greater affliction could befall us than to remember everything that we have seen, learned, or felt, with the utmost vividness and distinctness? Who would like to treasure up all the foolish things he had ever read or heard, along with the wise and suggestive ones? Who would willingly be cursed with a recollection of all the stupid or wicked things he had himself done, or of all the envious and spiteful sayings and the shabby acts of which he had been the victim? What if we would recall all the mortifications and humiliations of our boyhood; all the nausea of a long sea-sickness; all the excruciating aches and pains of a rheumatic attack; all the horror we felt when on the verge of bankruptcy; all the anguish inflicted by every misunderstanding with those who were dear to us; all the torture we suffered from a malignant newspaper libel? There are memories that are too morbidly retentive of the past; memories which haunt like a ghost, and keep perpetually before their possessors the ugly and disagreeable things which they would bury in oblivion. Again, forgetting has so much to do with forgiving, that in proportion as a man is blessed (or, in this case, cursed) with

a tenacious memory, he finds it harder to obey the scrip tural precept. Men of feeble memories have no concep tion of the clearness and intensity with which an old time injury comes back to the mind and soul of a man o potent memory. An insult is recalled so vividly that h flames up at the recollection as fiercely as he did at its re ception.

The necessity of memory to the scholar is obvious, but the value of its negative or rejecting power is not so well appreciated. The finest intellects are not more remarkable for the readiness with which they unconsciously select what is their proper mental food, than for the ease with which they resist and throw off what has no relation to their work or life. Their memories, like magnets stirring in sand that is mingled with steel-filings, draw to them only that for which they have an affinity. Hammerton, the author of "The Intellectual Life," writing to a student who lamented his defective memory, says: "So far from writing, as you seem to expect me to do, a letter of condolence on the subject of what you are pleased to call your 'miserable memory,' I feel disposed rather to indite a letter of congratulation. It is possible that you may be blessed with a selecting memory, which is not only useful for what it retains, but for what it rejects." He then cites the case of Goethe, whose passionate studies in many different directions, always in obedience to the predominant interests of the moment, he regards as the best example of the way in which a great intellect, with rare powers of acquisition and liberty to grow in free luxuriance, sends its roots into various soils, and draws from them the constituents of its sap. As a university or law student, he was not of the type which parents and professors consider satisfactory; but his wealth of mind was probably due to the liberty of browsing freely at will in all the fields of literature, according to the maxim of French law, *chacun prend son bien où il le trouve;* and had he been bound down to legal studies ex-

clusively, no one, it is likely, would ever have suspected his immense faculty of assimilation. What are called bad memories, Mr. Hammerton continues, are often the best; they are often the selecting memories. They seldom win distinctions in examinations, but in literature and art. "A good literary memory is not like a post-office, that takes in everything; but like a well-edited periodical, which prints nothing that does not harmonize with its intellectual purpose. A well-known author gave me this piece of advice: 'What you remember is what you ought to write, and you ought to give things exactly the degree of relative importance that they have in your memory. If you forget much, it will only save beforehand the labor of erasure.'" Sydney Smith said that he saw no more reason why he should remember all the books that had made him learned, than that he should remember all the dinners that had made him fat.

Great memories in our day are so rare that many of the well authenticated facts related concerning the feats of this faculty almost stagger belief. Many persons, because they have overtaxed the brain, and enfeebled it by dissipation, by the use of tobacco, opium and alcohol,—above all, by feeding it exclusively with novels, daily newspapers, and literary slop generally,—doubt the stories told of the astonishing strength and tenacity of other men's memories. It has been justly said that there is in most minds a standing guard to resist the entrance of knowledge into the brain,—vacancy, indifference, impatience, wool-gathering, narrowness of interests, absorption in self; and it is hard for the possessors of such minds, knowing their own emptiness, to believe that other men are full of information to overflowing. The memories of some of the famous men of antiquity, especially, seem miraculous to a person whose own treacherous memory, like a bag with holes, lets everything slip through that he puts into it. Books which are a kind of artificial memory, impair the recollection of many of the moderns.

Having few such storehouses of knowledge, the ancients were compelled to carry all their intellectual treasures in their heads. Men found no difficulty in remembering the twenty-four books of Homer, before the art of writing was invented. Cyrus knew the name of every soldier in his army. Themistocles could call the name of every one of the twenty thousand citizens of Athens. Seneca could repeat two thousand proper names in the order in which they had been told him, and could recite two hundred verses read to him for the first time by as many different persons. He tells us that the Emperor Hadrian could repeat two thousand words in the order he heard them. Cinna, the plenipotentiary sent by Pyrrhus to the Roman Senate, having been entertained at a banquet at which all the leading senators were present, addressed every one of them at their session the next morning accurately by name.

Prodigious as are these feats, they have been paralleled within the last three or four centuries. Scaliger could repeat a hundred lines after one reading. M. Angelo had on his lips the greater part of the poetry of Dante and Petrarch; and so had Galileo of Ariosto, Petrarch and Berni. Justus Leipsius had all Tacitus by heart, and pledged himself to repeat, word by word, any passage called for, allowing at the same time a dagger to be thrust into his body if he made a single trip or false repetition. Locke says that that "prodigy of parts," Pascal, knew the whole Bible by heart. He forgot nothing of what he had done, read, or thought in any part of his rational life. Magliabecchi, the Florentine librarian, had so portentous a memory that his head was called a "universal index, both of titles and matter." A gentleman who had lent him a manuscript, came to him one day after it had been returned, and pretending to have lost it, desired him to repeat of it as much as he could. Magliabecchi soon after wrote out the whole manuscript, without missing a word, or even varying from the spelling. So tenacious

and exact was his recollection, that he could tell where every important book stood in the great collections of different countries. He studied libraries as generals study the field in which they are to campaign. One day the Grand Duke sent to ask whether he could get a book that was particularly scarce, marked with four Rs, *rarissimus*, as Dominie Sampson would say. "No, sir," promptly replied the monster of memory; "it is impossible. Your Highness's treasury would not buy it for you; for there is but one in the world—that is in the Grand Signor's Library at Constantinople, and is the seventh book on the second shelf, on the right hand side as you go in."

Leibnitz, even when old, could repeat nearly all the poetry of Virgil, word by word. Saunderson knew by heart the Odes of Horace, Cicero's "Offices," and a large part of Juvenal and Persius. Jeremy Taylor, who was a living library, wrote his "Liberty of Prophesying" without access to books; and Pope tells us that his friend Bolingbroke could write on a particular subject, away from his books, as well as if he had them all about him. An amusing story is told of an English gentleman, whom Frederick the Great placed behind a screen, when Voltaire came to read him a manuscript poem of considerable length. The eavesdropper afterward tormented the poet by asserting that the poem was his, and proved the claim by repeating it word for word. It is related of a celebrated reporter for a London morning newspaper, that he took no notes whatever; and yet if an unexpected debate sprang up, and he was left for hours without any one to relieve him, he would write out the whole verbatim. While listening, he used to close his eyes, and lean with both hands upon his stick; and in this attitude was literally held "by the ear," so as to be incapable of thought, and almost of the use of his other senses. Even a fortnight after a debate had occurred, and during the intervention of other discussions, he would still retain a full recollection of the former,—saying he had put it by in a cor-

ner of his mind for future reference. Bishop Jewell, who died in 1571, could repeat exactly anything he had written, after one perusal. While the church bell was ringing for worship, he would commit a whole sermon, and repeat it verbatim. He could repeat forward and backward a long string of Welsh, Irish, foreign and barbarous words, after one or two hearings.

Great linguists have always been noted for their power both of retention and reproduction. Porson declared that he could repeat Smollett's "Roderick Random" from beginning to end, and that he would untertake to learn by heart a copy of the London "Morning Chronicle" in a week. One day he called upon a friend who chanced to be reading Thucydides, and who asked him the meaning of a certain word. Porson, on hearing the word, did not look at the book, but at once repeated the passage. His friend asked how he knew that the word was in that passage. "Because," replied the linguist, "the word occurs only twice in Thucydides; once on the right-hand page in your edition, and once on the left. I observed on which side you looked, and accordingly knew to which passage you referred." Ignatius de Rossi, the Italian prodigy of learning, surpassed even Porson, in mnemonic performances. Canon Lattanzi, his colleague in educational labor, related to the late Cardinal Wiseman, an anecdote of De Rossi's great memory. Spending a little time with the Canon in *villeggiatura* at Tivoli, De Rossi said that if any one would repeat a line from any of the four great poets of Italy, he would follow it by reciting a hundred lines in due order of connection. The trial was made, and, to the astonishment of every one, he was entirely successful. The query was then raised as to his ability to perform the same feat in the Latin classics. "It is twenty years," he replied, "since I read the Italian poets, and then it was only for amusement; of the Latin classics I have been professor, so you had better not try me." In the "Edinburgh Review," some years ago, it was stated

that Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary, acquired one of the Indian languages, sufficiently to qualify himself for his missionary duties, in three months. The Abbé Poule, Buffon and Byron, knew all their own works by heart. Cuvier's memory was enormous. It was a vast mirror of knowledge, embracing at once the grandest and minutest facts in natural science. He died, he said, with three books in his head.—the materials all ready and arranged, but not written down.

Mathews, the elder of the two famous comedians, was so familiar with his plays that he sometimes stepped aside as the curtain drew up, to ascertain the name of the piece advertised for the evening, and that, too, when he was tormented with cracks on the tongue, and uttered with the keenest pain what his audience so delighted to hear. Sir Walter Scott often astonished his friends by the vice-like grip of his memory. The Ettrick Shepherd says that when Scott once desired him to sing one of his (Hogg's) unprinted ballads, which the "Wizard of the North" had heard but once, and that three years before, he stuck fast at the eighth verse, upon which Scott began the ballad again, and recited every word from beginning to end. The ballad consisted of eighty-eight stanzas ! Many cases have been known of very illiterate persons with extraordinary verbal memories, some of whom could repeat the whole Bible from end to end with hardly a mistake. Professor Lawson, of England, sometimes examined his classes in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, without a book before him ; and he once declared that, if the Bible were lost, he could, with the exception of a few chapters in the Old Testament, restore it all. It is said that after he had perused the sermons of Ralph Erskine, he could repeat them almost entirely. A friend one day, in a conversation with him, cited certain opinions of Gibbon. "Stop!" cried Lawson again and again, "that is not Gibbon's view at all" ; and thereupon he proceeded to quote the identical words of the great historian of the Roman Empire, though

he had not read them for over thirty years. A simple perusal of one of his sermons stamped it indelibly on his brain, so that he could repeat it in the pulpit.

No class of men are more celebrated for feats of memory than actors. Their *memoriter* training tends to the strengthening of the faculty to an almost incredible degree. It is said that Cooke could commit to memory the contents of a daily newspaper in eight hours. William Lyon, an itinerant actor in Edinburgh, won about a hundred years ago a wager of a crown bowl of punch, by one of the most superhuman feats of memory on record. He bet that on the next day at rehearsal he would repeat the whole of a "Daily Advertiser"; and, though drunk the night before, accomplished the feat. How any human being could do this, considering the want of connection in the articles, the variety of the advertisements, and the general chaos which often reigns in a daily paper, must ever remain to common mortals an inscrutable mystery. The extraordinary powers of calculation, depending entirely upon memory, which some men have possessed, are among the most surprising facts in the history of this faculty. The mathematician Wallis, in bed and in the dark, extracted the cube root from a number consisting of thirty figures. Jedediah Buxton, an illiterate peasant, could tramp over a piece of land, and tells its contents in square feet or inches with as much exactness as if he had measured it with a chain. Being asked suddenly in a field how many cubical eighths of an inch there are in a triangular body whose three sides are, respectively, 23,145,789 yards, 5,642,732 yards, and 54,965 yards, he gave the exact solution from his head in five hours. Lawyers with a large practice often exhibit marvelous memories. Lord Lyndhurst, in the famous case of Small *vs.* Atwood, delivered a judgment which lasted for many hours, and dealt with an incredible number of intricate facts, without once looking at a note.

One of the most mysterious and striking, yet indisputa-

ble facts of the memory, is its tendency, when very powerful, to absorb thought, and even language, unconsciously. Ideas and words that vividly impress it, photograph themselves upon it forever. Many striking examples of this are well authenticated. Some years ago a Universalist minister in Massachusetts preached one Sunday afternoon, in exchange with a brother clergyman, a sermon which he was thunderstruck to learn had been preached in the forenoon by another speaker. It turned out, on inquiry, that the latter had gathered it from the lips of the supposed plagiarist at church, a few weeks before. The Boston "Congregationalist" states that some years ago two articles appeared in an eastern magazine which were found to be only repetitions, even to the *ipissima verba*, of certain essays already printed. The articles had been contributed by students who were regarded as the best writers in college, and, strange to say, of unimpeachable integrity. When told of the coincidence, they were as utterly astounded as their friends at the seeming theft, and warmly asserted their innocence. They denied all intention of plagiarism. As they were young men of exact scholarship, trained to great feats of memory, it is beyond a doubt, as the writer in the "Congregationalist" says, that having read up carefully on the subjects on which they were about to write, instead of digesting and assimilating their borrowed materials, they had unconsciously appropriated them word for word. Facts like these should make the critics of the daily press a little more charitable when they are disposed to leap to the conclusion that all literary parallelisms and coincidences are necessarily proofs of plagiarism, and to rush into print with the cry of "Stop Thief!" whenever a writer or speaker who has read, not to steal the thoughts of others, but to refresh his own exhausted mind, has unconsciously appropriated the thought or language, principles or passages, of another. Often a writer fancies his ideas to be original because he cannot recollect their sources.

It is said that Ben Jonson, one of the most learned men of his day, could not only repeat all that he had ever written, but entire books that he had read. Eusebius says that to the memory of Esdras we are indebted for the Hebrew Scriptures, which were destroyed by the Chaldeans. A French writer tells us of a young Corsican, to whom he dictated one day "an innumerable multitude" of Greek, Latin, and barbarous words, all distinct from one another; and when he was tired of doing so, the Corsican repeated them in the same order, and then in a reversed order without hesitation. In any account of wonderful memories an omission of that Thomas Fuller, the old divine, who lived in 1608–1661, would be an unpardonable chasm. The anecdotes told of his gift severely tax our credulity. He once undertook, after walking from Temple Bar, in London, to the farthest end of Cheapside, to repeat on his return the inscriptions on all the signs in their order, both backward and forward,—a feat which he triumphantly achieved. Pepys, in his diary, under date of January 22, 1660, says that Fuller told him that "he did lately, to four eminent scholars, dictate together in Latin upon different subjects of their proposing, faster than they were able to write, till they were tired." It is further told of Fuller's memory that he could repeat five hundred strange words at two hearings, and a sermon at one, without letting slip a word. He would sometimes, in writing a manuscript page, set down the first word of each line, from the top of the page to the bottom, and then the second word, and so on till the page was filled.

In 1790 there lived in Aberdeen, Scotland, a gentleman's servant, who, though utterly ignorant of Latin and Greek, yet, upon hearing eight or ten pages of Homer or Virgil distinctly recited, would forthwith repeat them without missing a word. When listening to the reading, he used to cover his face with his hands and lean upon a table. It is told of "Memory Corner Thompson," an Englishman, so called from his extraordinary gift of memory,

that he drew, in the space of twenty-two hours, a correct plan of the parish of St. James, Westminster, with parts of the parishes of St Marylebone, St. Ann, and St. Martin. In this were included all the squares, streets, courts, lanes, alleys, markets; every church, chapel, and public building; all stables and yards; all the public-houses and corners of the streets, with every pump, post, tree, house, bow window; and all the minutiæ about St. James' Palace. This he did in the presence of two gentlemen, solely from memory. Name any house with which he was intimate, and he would furnish an inventory of its contents from garret to cellar. The Rev. E. Coleridge had a verbal memory singularly tenacious and exact. He told the Royal Commissioners that he could repeat the whole of Homer, Horace and Virgil by heart. He declared that if he were called up in school, he could, with an English Shakespeare in his hand (instead of the proper book), take up a lesson wherever the scholars might be reciting, and construe the passage word by word, and answer any question that might be asked, and go on at once with his Shakespeare. The memory of musicians for sounds is well known. The marvelous delicacy of Mozart's ear, and the keenness of his recollection, are well attested by the story of his treasuring the notes of the *Miserere* at the Sistine Chapel at Rome. Though the copying of this piece of music was strictly forbidden, yet Mozart, then but fourteen years old, determined to make himself master of it. Seating himself in a corner of the church, he concentrated his attention powerfully on it, and on going out, noted down the entire piece. Next day he sang the *Miserere* at a concert, accompanying himself with the harpsichord,—which so electrified the Romans, that the Pope, hearing of the affair, requested that the musical prodigy should be presented to him. In this case the keenest attention, fastened on the music by an iron will, would not have availed, had it not been assisted by an ear sensitive and delicate to the last degree,—a gift for which Mozart

paid the tax of frequent torture, and Beethoven, at last, that of incurable deafness.

Theodore Parker's memory was remarkably mature and highly cultivated. When in the Cambridge Divinity School, he feared that it was defective, and so had an immense chronological chart hung up in his room, the contents of which he tasked himself to commit. It included all the names and dates from Adam down to Nimrod, Ptolemy, Soter, Heliogabalus, and the rest. A gentleman who was pursuing some historical inquiries, and wished for fuller information concerning the barbarous feudal codes of the Middle Ages before the time of Charlemagne, applied to Parker for information. "Go," was the reply, "to alcove twenty-four, shelf one hundred and thirteen, of the college library at Cambridge, and you will find the information you need in a thick quarto, bound in vellum, and lettered Potgissier de Statu Servorum." De Quincey had all his life an abnormal memory. Its minuteness and tenacity were often a positive snare and entanglement, leading him into long digressions, from which he never came back to his theme. The brilliant conversation of Sir James Mackintosh was fed by a memory that held everything in its grasp. "His mind," said Robert Hall, "is a spacious repository hung round with beautiful images, and when he wants one he has nothing to do but reach up his hand to a peg and take it down."

No faculty of the mind is sharpened more by use, or more quickly blunted by neglect, than the memory. Many of M. Houdin the conjuror's tricks were really feats of memory and quick attention. He trained himself to such a pitch of keenness of attention, that he could walk by a toy-shop window, and take in at a glance, so as to name them afterward, the number, the arrangement and other particulars of forty articles , arranged in a manner purely arbitrary. Sir William Hamilton thought that he could thus take in *seven* articles at a glance without counting, and was rather proud of his ability ! It is said

that Henderson, the actor, repeated to Dugald Stewart, after a single reading, such a portion of a newspaper that the metaphysician thought it marvelous. "If, like me," said Henderson modestly, in reply to the exclamations of surprise, "you had trusted for your bread to getting words by heart, you would not be astonished that habit should produce facility."

We shall speak of but one more remarkable memory,—that of Lord Macaulay, which, extraordinary by nature, was also cultivated and trained with the most sedulous care. He forgot nothing, apparently, which he had once read. Like the man in Juvenal, he could tell you at a moment's notice all about

> "Nutricem Anchisæ, nomen patriamque novercæ
> Anchemoli; dicet quot Acestes vixerit annos,
> Quot Siculus Phrygibus vini donaverit urnas."

The secret of his vast acquirements, according to his biographer, lay in this gift, combined with another hardly less invaluable,—the capacity for taking in at a glance the contents of a printed page. When a mere child, he accompanied his father on an afternoon call, and, finding on a table Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel,', possessed himself so completely of its contents while the elders were talking, that on his return home he repeated to his mother as many cantos as she had the patience or strength to listen to. At one period of his life he declared that if by some miracle of vandalism all the extant copies of "The Pilgrim's Progress" and "Paradise Lost" were destroyed, he would undertake to reproduce them both from memory, whenever a revival of learning should come. In his journal of a trip across the Irish Sea, we read, under date of August 16, 1849, that he sat on deck during the whole voyage, and, as he could not read, "used an excellent substitute for reading. "I went through 'Paradise Lost,' in my head. I could still repeat half of it, and that the

best half." One day he handed to Lord Aberdeen a sheet of foolscap covered with writing arranged in three parallel columns down each of the four pages. "This document, of which the ink was still wet," says Trevelyan, his biographer, "proved to be a full list of the senior wranglers at Cambridge, for the hundred years during which the names of senior wranglers had been recorded in the University calendar." On another occasion, Macaulay picked up, while he was waiting in a Cambridge coffee-house for a post-chaise, a country newspaper containing two poetical pieces, read them once, and, without thinking of them again for forty years, repeated them after that time without the change of a word. An English friend, who was an eye and ear witness to the affair, told the writer of this, some years ago, of the following feat o Macaulay's memory. About twenty-seven years ago, Dr Routh, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, died at the age of one hundred years. The next morning, at a literary breakfast in London, where Macaulay was present, the Times was brought in, and one of the company read from it the announcement of Dr. Routh's decease Immediately there poured forth from Macaulay a flood o luminous talk, in the course of which he called attention to the fact that Dr. Routh, who was born in 1753, might as a child, have been in company with Fontenelle, wh himself lived to a hundred, having been born in 1657, o about the time Lewis the Fourteenth came to the thron of France, and died in 1757. The speaker then proceeded, on the spur of the moment, to sketch in rapid outlin some of the principal events,—political, scientific and literary,—in Europe, Asia and America, which had occurre within the compass of two lives, of which one had bu yesterday been extinguished. With matchless ease an rapidity he condensed into a fifteen minutes' talk a multitude of important facts, which few other men coul summon from the pages of history, except after man days of research; and under circumstances which pos

itively forbade any possibility of preparation, or a cut-and-dry impromptu, electrified a cultivated and critical audience by the depth the accuracy, and, above all, the prompt availability of his learning.

So much does the intellectual and moral advancement of the human race depend upon memory, that Gräffe, Dr. Gray, Aimé Paris, and others have exhausted their ingenuity in contriving systems of mnemotechny to assist the memory, and increase its power. The great objection to such systems is that they are founded upon incongruous or superficial associations of ideas, such as we observe in the common forms of insanity. Experience, moreover, shows that the resolution and effort which the mastery of these systems implies would render them superfluous, except so far as every man frames an artificial memory for himself, suited to his own turn of mind. The true art of cultivating the memory may be condensed into five rules. 1. The association or connection of ideas. To retain facts permanently, we should gain them in such order that each shall be a nucleus or basis for more in an endless series. The highest kind of memory is the philosophic, which associates facts and truths with universal principles. 2. The habit of close attention, which depends largely upon the degree of interest we feel in what is to be remembered. The want of memory of which so many complain is like Falstaff's deafness: "Rather out, please you. It is the disease of not listening, the malady of not marking, that I am troubled withal." Almost every person recollects what keenly interests him. The "dull" boy, who cannot remember a line of his arithmetic or grammar lesson, is the very one who never forgets a face, a bird's nest, or a foot-path. Why is it that the sportsman, who forgets the facts of history or science, can recall so readily and accurately the names and pedigree of all the winners in the great races? It is simply because he has been strongly interested in the latter class of facts, but not in the former. When the ghost says to

Hamlet: "Remember me!" he replies: "Yes, as long as memory holds a place in this distracted globe." The scene he had witnessed made so intense an impression that it formed from that time a part of his moral being, separable from it only by his dissolution. In strong minds the habit of attention is not a mere aptness to receive an impression; it is a strenuous effort. They seize facts as a hungry lion seizes his prey. Emerson remarks that there are some things which everybody remembers. A creditor is in little danger of forgetting his debtor, and men generally keep an insult fresh. Ben Jonson used to say that it was hard to forget the last kick. In Scotland it was customary in the olden time to maintain boundary lines by whipping a boy on the site. The feverish, hurried life which most persons live to-day, and the nervous exhaustion consequent upon over-stimulus and prolonged fatigue, are fatal to vivid remembrance. Men whose minds are continually flitting from one thing to another, dwelling upon nothing long, must necessarily receive but transitory impressions. 3. A clear apprehension of what is to be remembered. 4. A strong determination to remember. Though memory depends largely upon insight and mental activity, yet there is no doubt that a man can remember in a great degree, as Johnson said a man could compose,—by dogged determination. Euler, the mathematician, being almost totally blind, was obliged to make and to retain in his head the calculations and *formulæ* which others preserve in books. The result was that the extent, readiness and accuracy of his mathematical memory became prodigious, and D'Alembert declared it to be barely credible to those who had seen its feats. No other faculty of the mind is so rapidly strengthened by exercise as memory. When Edward Everett began preaching, he learned by heart only one page of his sermon at a time; when he quit preaching, he could learn the entire sermon by reading it over twice. "A very common reason," says a writer, "why men do

not remember, is that they do not try; a hearty and ever-present desire to prevail is the chief element of all success. Nothing but the fairy's wand can realize the capricious desire of the moment, but as to the objects of laudable wishes, deeply breathed and for many a night and day ever present to the mind, these are placed by Providence more within our reach than is commonly believed. When a person says, If I could only have my wish I would excel in such an art or science, we may generally answer: The truth is, you have no such wish; all you covet is the empty applause, not the substantial accomplishment." 5. Method. In studying a subject, we shall fix our acquisitions most securely in the mind by mastering its parts in a natural and orderly sequence, from the easier to the most difficult. Study of this kind has been compared to a well-built staircase, by which you can climb to a great height with a minimum of fatigue, lifting the body only a few inches at a time. In a philosophic memory, the various parts of a subject, like the stones in an arch, will often keep one another in place.

Among the best rules ever laid down for the cultivation of the memory are those of Thomas Fuller, some of whose feats we have mentioned: "First, soundly infix in thy mind what thou desirest to remember. What wonder is it if agitation of business jog that out of thy head which was there rather tacked than fastened? It is best knocking in the nail overnight, and clinching it the next morning. Overburden not thy memory to make so faithful a servant a slave. Remember Atlas was weary. Have as much reason as a camel, to rise when thou hast thy full load. Memory, like a purse, if it be overful that it cannot shut, all will drop out of it: take heed of a gluttinous curiosity to feed on many things, lest the greediness of the appetite of the memory spoil the digestion thereof. Marshal thy notions into a handsome method. One will carry twice more weight trussed and packed up in bundles than when it lies untoward flapping

and hanging about his shoulders. Things orderly fardled up under heads are most portable."

Finally the retentiveness of the memory depends largely upon the bodily condition. The impressions made upon the mental tablet are like those made upon the photographer's plate. If the chemicals, solutions, etc., are good and properly applied, and the plate is in a condition to receive the impressions, there will be a good picture; otherwise it will be a dull, brown, and indistinct. So with a man who is sickly and debilitated, and whose brain is consequently weak; the pictures made upon his mind will partake of its weakness and obscurity. The memory is therefore one of the most delicate tests of disease or natural decay in the brain. When a man constantly forgets his appointments; mislays his books and papers; is oblivious of the names of his dearest friends; forgets at any interruption to finish a task which he has begun, and finds that he cannot hold in his mental gripe for a few consecutive minutes the name of the month or the day of the week,—and especially when along with this, he feels an occasional numbness in a finger, and drops his cane unconsciously in walking,—he has reason, according to medical authority, to fear that a softening of the brain, or some form of cerebral disorganization, has begun, and he cannot too quickly apply the remedy.

Fools.

"Be tolerant to fools."—Marcus Aurelius.

WHY is it that fools are laughed at, even by kind-hearted men? Is not the lack of brains a misfortune to be pitied rather than sneered at by those who are better endowed? Is intellectual deficiency or deformity less entitled to our commiseration than physical? Pascal has answered these questions in his usual acute way. "Whence is it," he asks, "that a lame man does not offend us, while the crippled in mind does offend us? It is because the lame man acknowledges that we walk straight; whereas the crippled in mind maintain that it is we who go lame. But for this, we should feel more compassion for them than resentment." The same profound thinker tells us, however, in another place, that man is necessarily so much of a fool that it would be a species of folly not to be a fool,—a comforting theory to the stupid, for if wisdom is attainable only through foolishness, who is more to be congratulated than he who has scaled the dizziest peaks of folly, the fool *par excellence?*

Whatever may be the reason, we confess we have a kindly feeling for fools. Like Charles Lamb, we love to discover a streak of folly in a man; we venerate an honest obliquity of understanding. The more laughable blunders a man commits in your company, the more tests he gives you that he is not sly, snaky, and hypocritical,—that he is not, while whispering honeyed words in your ear, playing some subtle, treacherous game to overreach you. That fools are happy beings, all will admit. It is the empty vessel that has a merry ring; the open eye that weeps.

It is the great fault of the present age that it is overwise, —that it is too transcendentally sapient for its own comfort. We read essays on ventilation and drainage till we hardly dare to breathe lest we should inhale deadly gases and microscopic particles of poison. We analyze our food, hunting for adulterations, till we almost dread to eat for fear of being poisoned. We put microscopes to our eyes, and cannot drink for fear of animalcules. We investigate and pry into the foundations of our beliefs till we become universal skeptics, and are positive only that we are positive of nothing. Instead of enjoying the sweet of life as it comes up, and finding a heart to laugh at the bitter, we are continually debating whether life is worth living, and racking our brains to provide for some future dreaded contingency, letting the flow and quintessence of life escape ere we are ready to enjoy it. We are always preparing for a "rainy day," or some calamity that may break upon us like a thunderbolt. It is even rare to hear any man laugh now-a-days, at least with the careless, ringing laugh of folly; nobody gives care to the winds long enough for such an outburst of merriment; everywhere we find that the happy, simple-hearted fool of olden times is extinct, and that the race of calculators and economists has succeeded. The schoolmaster is now abroad, and there are few persons in these intensely intellectual days who sympathize with gentle Elia's affection for the fool. "I love a fool," says he, "as naturally as if I were kith and kin to him. When a child, with childlike apprehensions, that dived not below the surface of the matter, I read those *Parables*,—not guessing at the involved wisdom,—I had more yearnings toward that simple architect that built his house upon the sand, than I entertained for his more cautious neighbor; I grudged at the hard censure pronounced at the quiet soul that kept his talent. * * * I never have made an acquaintance since that lasted, or a friendship that answered, with any that had not some tincture of the absurd in their characters. And take my

word for this, reader, and say a fool told it you, if you please, that he who had not a dram of folly in his mixture had pounds of much worse matter in his composition."

One of the advantages of folly is that in society it raises no expectations,—pledges you to nothing. Among the most unhappy people in society are those who have won a reputation for smartness, and who therefore have a reputation to maintain. If you are noted as a brilliant talker, a sayer of witty things, you must exert yourself, at whatever cost or inconvenience, to keep up to your level. In vain will you plead ill-health or low spirits, a head-ache or a heart-ache; you may have lost money in a stock speculation, or buried your grandmother, or been jilted by a flirt; no matter, you must make an effort to shine, unless you would have it whispered about that you have been overrated, or are suffering from a softening of the brain. Everybody has heard the story of the fashionable lady who invited a well-known wit to a party, and in course of the evening sent her little daughter to him with the message: "Please, sir, mamma wishes to ask if you will proceed to be witty now? Once a wit, always a wit,—so runs the bond. Not so with the dull man; once ranked in this category, he is never pestered with solicitations to amuse his fellow-beings, or assailed by criticism. The chance is, that he is suspected of possessing a hidden fund of wit or wisdom which he does not care to betray. It may be affirmed, therefore, that "in society, if wit is silvern, dullness is golden. Wit is the bee that works; dullness is the drone that waits snugly for the honey to come to its mouth."

It may seem paradoxical to maintain that fools are a blessing to society; but a little reflection will teach us a large charity for them,—will show that they are essential to its very existence. They are the cyphers of the community, without which the social problem could not be worked out. What, for example, would be the result, if, whenever a new doctrine is propounded in science, we

were all profound thinkers, capable of tracing out all its logical consequences? The world would be in an uproar, and harmony would be an impossibility. Why are men of science often so exceedingly sensitive to some apparently unimportant attack upon one of their minor conclusions? Is it not because they are accustomed to logical methods, and know that if you touch the remotest outwork of their doctrine you send a shock to the very center of their systems? Be herctical in the most trifling inference from mathematical investigation, and it is at once evident," says, a writer, "that you must come into conflict with the fundamental axioms on which the whole science reposes. We are tolerant only because we are stupid. We allow the enemy to open some very remote back door, because it is so very small, and we do not see that we have admitted him as effectually as if we had flung the main gates wide open." A critic of Joseph De Maistre complains that he would defend the most absolute superfœtation of the Romish Church, or the most obsolete custom of absolute monarchies, with the same reverence and conviction as the fundamental dogmas of Christianity: But the reason is plain. In the eyes of this unswerving and consistent champion of Ultramontanism and Divine Right, each of these things was a part of a sacred whole, and could not be abandoned with safety or honor. He had started in life, as Dr. Johnson phrases it, with his fagot of opinions made up, and he felt that it was impossible to draw out a single stick without weakening the whole. "if we had only known in time," says a writer, "how much trouble early physical inquirers were bringing into the world, how many controversies they were introducing what a biting acid they were pouring upon the consolidated doctrines of ages, we should have sprung upon them and strangled them at their birth. We are amazed that Galileo should have been persecuted far asserting the motion of the earth; but if his judges had caught some dim glimpse of the harvest that was to spring from that little

seed of heresy, of the tremendous explosion that would follow when the spark had fairly set fire to the train, they would have trampled it out more carefully than we should try to check the speed of the most deadly contagion." Is it not evident, then, that we live in peace with each other only because we are stupid,—that, but for this lucky fact, we should be burning everybody who disagrees with us?

Again, fools make the best reformers. What would be the condition of the world, if it had no men of one idea, —men who view every subject from a single stand-point, and are dominated by one single purpose, regarding all others as trivial,—it is easy to see. Could we lift the veil, and discern all the consequences of a single change in the world's constitution, we should all be conservatives. It is not the men of broad and comprehensive vision, whose horizon of thought embraces many objects and objections, that project and push through great plans of reform. It is the mole-eyed man, who has brooded over a single truth till it overshadows his whole mental horizon, that makes the best reformer. Such a person is tormented by none of the doubts that distract and cripple the profound thinker. Wasting no time in deliberation, he cuts the knots which he cannot untie, and, overleaping all logical preliminaries, comes at once to a conclusion. Having got hold of an idea, he never bothers his brains with objections, but goes at once to making proselytes, satisfied that to procure its adoption is the one thing essential to insure the millennium. For example, his panacea may be ventilation; and, viewing all other conceivable things in its relations to ventilation, he may be content to spend his life like a miner, in continual working at one narrow subterranean gallery; but he generally, by his persistence, gains his end, and the world is benefited by his toils.

Again, fools are absolutely necessary to make society endurable. There is a disposition in our day to worship great men. Hero-worship is, indeed, the mania of the age. We are in danger of being tyrannized over by clever

men. A man of erratic talents is called a genius, and a hundred follies, and even vices, are excused in him, while his honest neighbor who startles society by no freaks or extravagances, and can boast only of good sense, is sneered at as "slow." Yet in the vast majority of cases the man of brilliant talents is infinitely less useful than the man of common sense. All the great departments of practical life are filled with "slow and sure," rather than with smart men. Our best merchants, statesmen, generals, judges, are plain men, not men of genius. God never intended that clever men should monopolize everything. He did not make the world for clever men only. Doubtless a certain number of men of genius are necessary to every age and country. They are the very guano of the exhausted State. But no sensible farmer thinks of smothering his field with guano. Make the air all oxygen, and who could breathe it? Brilliant men are well enough occasionally, but who wants to be always staring at pyrotechnics?

What a comfort is a dull but kindly person at the fireside, to one who is worn and fatigued by the cares and struggles of life! A ground shade over a gas-light hardly brings more solace to the dazzled eyes than does such a one to our minds. Even the wisest and most thoughtful men love such repose. According to Cumberland, "even dullness, as long as it was accompanied with placidity, was no absolute discommendation of the companion of Lord Mansfield's private hours; it was a kind of cushion to his understanding." Mediocrity is, after all, the best thing in life. The tasteless commonplaces are the standards,—bread and water, and good dull, steady people. Emerson justly says, that society loves creole natures, and sleepy, languishing manners,—the air of drowsy strength that disarms criticism. To make social intercourse profitable, there must be an opportunity for perfect relaxation. The charm of the best society is the absence of all effort to sparkle or astonish. The most weari-

some of people are the De Staëls and "Conversation-Sharps," who are always saying brilliant things,—who feel like Titus, "I have lost a moment!" if they suffer a fragment of time to escape unenriched by a fine saying. When the author of "Corinne" visited Germany, the leading men-of-letters there shuddered at the approach of this impersonation of volubility. Schiller groaned over "the weary hours he had to pass" in her company. and Goethe was both annoyed and disgusted by her. Nothing tires so soon as unvaried sprightliness, unshaded mirth, and brilliancy unrelieved. It is like the *toujour perdrix* of the French abbé or dining eternally off capsicum, peppercorns and jams.

> "Better than such discourse doth silence long,
> Long barren silence square with my desire;
> To sit without emotion, hope or aim,
> In the loved presence of my cottage fire,
> And listen to the flapping of the flame,
> Or kettle chirping its faint under-song."

We would as soon lodge over a powder-magazine as live with a man of genius. We would rather have water than nectar for a steady drink,—bread and butter than ambrosia for our daily food. In nature the most useful things are the most common. Water, air, bread, are cheap and plentiful. Leaves and grass are neither of crimson nor of gold color, but plain, sober green. "When a boy," says a writer, "I often made fireworks. Once in compounding a set of squibs, I forgot to mix up with the positives of saltpetre and gunpowder the negative of pounded charcoal; and in firing them off, each consisted of but one explosion, bright, no doubt, but transient also, and dangerous withal; while the squibs which were rightly mixed up were both bright and sparkling, too, and much more lasting; besides, they did not scorch me. Dull men are to society what charcoal is to squibs.

Finally, we must add that the true fool *nascitur, non*

fit. If a man has not the natural gift, he may say and do many foolish things, but he will never manifest a positive genius for folly. He may miss the point of a joke or a remark, laugh in the wrong place, read without getting at the drift, be confident without grounds, live without learning by experience, and act without realizing the consequences, and yet not be an absolute, unmistakable fool. On the other hand, if a man has the inborn talent, there is no pinnacle of dullness to which he may not soar. Johnson recognized this when he said of the elder Sheridan: "Why, sir, Sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity is not in nature."

Angling.

GOLDEN June,—the "leafy month," which is a happy compromise between weeping spring and broiling midsummer,—is near at hand, and in a few weeks hundreds of our fellow-citizens will be seeking refreshment for body and soul in the pleasant and healthful amusement of angling. Of all the out-door recreations which relieve the monotony of life, and cheat care and sorrow of their sting, there is no other, we believe, so replete with gentle excitement and sustained gratification, —none which so rarely palls on the taste, which age so seldom withers or custom so infrequently stales,—as that which has been glorified by Izaak Walton. Who can forget the moment of exultation, when, a newly-breeched urchin, he first captured with a piece of twine, a crooked pin, and a worm, a petty perch or catfish ? Who, in reviewing a long life, can recall any other sensation comparable in intensity with that he felt when he grassed his first trout after a long and almost desperate contest ? All first sensations have a peculiar thrill; but no other so penetrates to the very core and marrow of one's being as this of the first fish caught with a fly. The first successful shot at a flying bird; the first "check-mate!" which has escaped your lips after a hard-fought match with the knights and pawns; the first ten-strike in a bowling alley; the shooting a boat's length ahead of your rival near the judges' stand in your first race; the first appearance of an essay or "pome" from your pen in the village newspaper; the first brief after your call to the bar; the titillating plaudit after your first essay or talk at a literary club: the sensations produced by these are all more or less

similar in kind, but they all, even if equal in degree, lose their edge as time wears on. Perhaps the nearest approximation to the feeling in question is that which is experienced by the despairing lover when he hears the trembling "Yes," or the electric thrill that follows the first union of his lips with those of her he adores; or, again, a young lady may have felt something like it on her first appearance at a fashionable party, when she saw all eyes turned toward her, and knew that her dress was divinely made, and that her gloves fitted exquisitely. But this joy can be felt but once in life, while the first fish comes back to recollection as fresh, as thrilling, as when the heart beat quick at its capture. It is a striking fact that while other pleasures pall with age, the fondness for fishing outlives even the capacity of enjoying it. Bodily infirmities may weigh us down; the nervous energy may have left our arm, and the quick sight our eye; we may hobble with difficulty to the brook-side, and go away with rheumatic aches and pains; yet, even then, when fallen into the lean and slippered pantaloon, we love to fight our piscatory battles over again, and to tell any listener whom we can buttonhole of our triumphs when we captured

> "The springing trout, in speckled pride,—
> The salmon, monarch of the tribe."

Is it not strange, then considering the innocence and admitted fascination of this sport, that it should have been scowled upon by some moralists? "An angler," says the author of the "Tin Trumpet," "is a piscatory assassin,—a Jack Ketch, catcher of Jack, * * * Everything pertaining to the angler's art is cowardly, cruel, treacherous, and cat-like." "Angling," growls the great literary bear, Dr. Johnson, "is an amusement with a stick and a string, with a fool at one end and a hook at the other." The secret of this cynical sarcasm probably is that the old fellow essayed at some time to cast a fly for trout or grayling,

or to fish with ground bait for gudgeons, and came home with a superfluous basket. No wonder the great lexicographer conceived a disgust for the sport, and denounced the grapes he could not reach as sour,—his morose piety barely saving him from swearing! It would have been marvelous, indeed, if that clumsy, elephantine man, that literary hippopotamus,—had succeeded in beguiling the shy tenants of the stream; in mastering without an apprenticeship a craft which requires as much tact, strategy, and finesse, as diplomacy or war. Fancy this awkward and impatient giant trying to beguile the tricky trout with a rod almost as slender as a pipe-stem, and a line like a spider's thread! Fancy the leviathan of literature striding among the bushes on the sedgy bank of a trout-brook,—sweating at every pore, blowing like a whale, and crashing through the tangled branches like a rhinoceros through the underwood of an African jungle! Of course he would lose all patience, especially if he should chance to dash his foot against some hidden stub or stone, and fall sprawling to the earth with a thundering sound, while his hat and wig were caught by the branches of an overhanging tree! Of course he would throw down the rod and line in disgust, and would let many a volcanic explosion escape from his lips, and ever afterward associate the "speckled beauties" of the brook with anything but pleasant recollections!

We honor the great moralist, in spite of his anti-angling heresies. Gruff and bigoted though he was, he had a large heart, the essential qualities of which were the same as those that made up the fresh, genial, kindly nature of Izaak Walton. He had patience enough to compile his dictionary,—a colossal task, which would have taxed the energies of half-a-dozen other men,—patience

——"to chase
A panting syllable through time and space,
Start it at home, and hunt it in the dark
To Gaul, to Greece, and into Noah's ark,"—

but not enough to coax the shy trout from his hiding-place. To the opinion of Johnson we would oppose that of men who have made a more thorough trial of the sport, —men who have stood for days up to their knees in water, and in the coldest weather, intent on their employ; who have returned to it again and again with the keenest relish, and who, after spending the vacations of a life-time in piscatory amusement, have not wearied of it at last. We might oppose, also, the verdicts of hundreds of men of the highest rank and genius, who have been enthusiastically fond of angling, and proud to rank themselves among the disciples of gentle Izaak Walton. We know that "holy George Herbert," the pet of the English Church, loved angling, and to his name, and those of Dr. Howell, Sir Henry Wotton, Sir John Offley, and others cited by Izaak, might be added that of Gay, who alternately wrote his poetry and caught his trout at Amesbury; Coleridge, the weird poet of the Lakes; Sir Humphrey Davy, who never tired of fishing, though he confessed that, through his lack of skill, his flies always fell like lead on the water; Gibbon, Chantrey, Sir Walter Scott, and the heroic Nelson, who was an expert fly-fisher, and so passionately fond of the sport that he continued it with his left hand, after he had lost his right in the service of his country. Dr. Paley was so enamored of angling that he hobbled to the river's side in spite of his bodily infirmities, to ply the line, and had his portrait painted with a fishing-rod in his hand. Being asked by the Bishop of Durham when one of his great works would be finished, he answered naïvely, as if fly-fishing and not philosophy, were the main business of his life: "My lord, I shall work steadily at it when fly-fishing season is over." It has been said that Zimmerman learned in the seclusion of this pastime to turn his contemplative eye inward, and, finding that he was never less alone than when alone discovered the virtues and charms of that solitude on which he has so eloquently and seductively discoursed. Wordsworth, the man of "cheerful yesterdays and confident to-

morrows," was passionately fond of fishing, and it was while resting

> ——" beneath the floating shade
> Of willows grey, close crowding o'er the brook,"

that he acquired that profound knowledge of Nature's ways which has made his verse a delight to all thoughtful readers.

Besides all these, the shield of fly-fishing is emblazoned with the names of George IV., Harvey, Dr. Babington, Henry Mackenzie, Christopher North, who has written a book of charming idyls on the craft; Chantrey, the sculptor; Emmerson, the geometrician; Rennie, the zoologist; Dr. Bethune, who has prefaced an edition of Walton's "Angler" with an elaborate and learned introduction,—and other notables whom we have not time to name. That Shakspeare was an angler we have no positive knowledge, but cannot doubt, when we consider the apt allusions to the craft in his plays, and how familiar he was with all sports, from liming a bird to stalking a deer. As we read the exclamation of Maria on the approach of Malvolio: "Here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling," or the fine passage in which the poet contrasts fly-fishing with bait-fishing,—

> " The pleasantest angling is to see the fish
> Cut with its golden oars the silver stream,
> And greedily devour the treacherous bait.
> So angle we,"—

we can easily fancy him strolling along the banks of the beautiful and picturesque Avon, ever and anon casting his line into the stream, and landing a trout or a grayling on the greensward. Walton goes so far as to claim the prophet Amos as a fisher, making Piscator observe that "he that shall read the humble, low, plain style of that prophet, and compare it with the high, glorious, eloquent style of the prophet Isaiah (though they both be equally

true) may easily believe Amos to be not only a shepherd, but a good-natured, plain fisherman: which I do the rather believe by comparing the affectionate, loving, lowly, humble epistles of Saint Peter, Saint James, and Saint John, who we know were all fishers, with the glorious language and high metaphors of Saint Paul, whom we may believe was not."

The eminent statesman of Europe and America often escapes from his protocols and red-tape to recruit his weary brain on the banks of the trout-brook, or in the company of the king-fisher and the heron. What eloquence, statesmanship, and wise legislation, do we not owe to such hours of recreation! The great statesman of Marshfield found his best escape from "carking care" in fishing. As Starr King says, "in bait and debate he was equally persuasive." The old salt, Peterson, declared that he "never saw anybody so smart at taking a trout from his hole"; and after doing this, or hauling a blue-fish through the surf, Webster would turn to his companions and say: "This is better than wasting time in the Senate, gentlemen." It was in fishing for trout in Marshfield that he composed the famous passage on the surviving veterans of the battle for his first Bunker Hill address. He would pull out a lusty specimen, it is said, shouting: "Venerable men, you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day." He would unhook them into his basket, declaiming: "You are gathered to your fathers, and live only to your country in her grateful remembrance and your own bright example." In his boat, fishing for a cod, he composed or rehearsed the passage on Lafayette, when he hooked a very large cod, and, as he pulled his nose above water, exclaimed: "Welcome! all hail! and thrice welcome, citizen of two hemispheres!"

In the days of Greece and Rome even ladies did not disdain to angle for fish as well as men. According to

Plutarch, Cleopatra was a votary of the piscatory art, and so keen did the rivalry become between her and Antony, that he resorted to the meanest artifices to insure victory. Mortified and irritated by the queen's superiority, he engaged divers to take live fish, and place them on his hook. This was done so expertly that he pulled up fish after fish in rapid succession. Learning in some way the secret of his sudden success, she pretended to congratulate him and to admire his dexterity, at the same time that she devised a cunning means of revenge. Another match was arranged, and the fishing began in the presence of a large company of friends. Antony soon had a bite, and pulled up a large *salted* fish, to his great disgust, and amid the loud laughter of all present. The secret was out; Antony's trick was exposed; and once woman's wit had proved too much for man's ingenuity. A diver, specially instructed by the queen, had got the start of Antony's, and had attached the salt fish to his hook.

In England fly-fishing by ladies is by no means uncommon. Not long since the London "Field" announced that a certain beautiful Miss had captured a salmon weighing seventeen pounds, a statement which drew from a Cambridge poet the following impassioned lines:

> "Not artificial flies my fancy took;
> Nature's own magic lured me to your hook;
> Play me no more,—no thought to 'scape have I,
> But land me, land me, at your feet to die."

It is to be hoped that American ladies may more generally practise this "gentle art," which is so health-giving and so well adapted to them. When they shall have become as expert in casting a fly as in setting the nets for beaux, we may expect that their husbands will have more trout and fewer *pouts* for their dinners.

Angling in our ordinary brooks and lakes is pleasant and healthful, but to enjoy the acme of this earthly felicity, one should go to the mountain brooks and streams of

Maine,—those running into Moosehead Lake, or those that connect the Rangely Lakes. Here, in waters of almost icy coldness, surrounded and overhung by the dense forest through whose foliage hardly a sunbeam penetrates, are real brook trout,—leviathans, compared with which those caught near the haunts of men are but minnows. Choosing some quiet pool, into which the brawling waters after tumbling and foaming over rocks, pause for a few moments in their headlong career, you glance down into the glassy water. Shade of Walton! what a sight! See those monarchs of the brook resting motionless upon the pebbly bottom! How distinctly they reveal themselves to you in the crystal depths! Now move softly with cat-like step, get ready your rod and reel, attach your fly to the "leader," and drop it on the surface of the pool as softly as a spider drops at the end of his half-spun thread! Hardly does it touch the surface when an electrifying jerk, which makes your heart throb and leap into your very throat, tells you that a monster of the brook,—a triton among the minnows,—has seized your bait. Presently the line becomes taut, and begins to move up the stream. You pull gently on it, when the trout, feeling the prick of the hook, darts away with an arrow's swiftness, and the reel spins out with a whiz like that of a spindle in a cotton-mill. Let it spin, for he is so big, so strong and so tricky, that if you stop it, it will snap like packthread. Forty yards from the starting-point he brings up under a submerged stump, and there anchors. Evidently he understands the laws of mechanics, for he takes such advantage of a prong of the stump, that all the leverage is in his favor. You might as well pull at the root as pull at him. Byron says of one of his languishing beauties, that when she cast herself upon the neck of Don Juan, "there she grew." Well, there, between the arms of that pine stump, *he* grows. For twenty minutes, that seem an hour, he sticks and hangs. Suddenly, just as you begin to feel that you are literally *stumped*, without the

slightest warning, he shoots up like a rocket to the surface, and then begin the most marvellous series of acrobatic feats ever attempted by an ichthyological gymnast, even in Maine. For half an hour more he leaps, whirls, darts, flounders, dives, dodges, till at last, exhausted by his desperate, super-piscine efforts, he gives up the struggle. Trembling in every nerve with excitement, you tow him gently to the bank, and fearing lest he should even now give a flop into the stream, you "creel" the noble victim, and pause to gaze on your prize. There he lies stretched out in the basket, "life's fitful fever over,"—an eight pounder, almost too large for his receptacle. How symmetrical his form! How brilliant those hues of orange and crimson and gold, on his sides; how deep the contrast of those on his back; and how bright and fresh-looking the white, broad belly is! Here are colors and gradations of tint which mock at all efforts of the painter's art to imitate them; and, as you feast your eyes upon their beauty, it seems almost profanation to tickle your palate with such a dish,—a dish "fit for the gods" only, and not for vulgar epicures. No more angling that day for you! You have won at Waterloo, and the conquest of half-pounders after this death-struggle with Napoleon would be tame.

There are many amusements which exact patience for their enjoyment; but no one, perhaps, makes a more exhausting draught on this virtue than angling. Fish are very shy and very capricious creatures,—hardly less than were Eve's daughters, before this age of "Woman's Rights." Like the "gadders" of the sex, they are here, there and everywhere; you have first to find where they are, and then you must coax them to bite. No matter how deeply you may have pondered the directions of old Izaak, that *Hooker* of the Piscatory Polity, you cannot sometimes with the utmost cunning, tempt them from their hiding-places. It has been said that no man should ever think of going-a-fishing who cannot sit all day in a hot sun, amid

swarms of hungry flies and mosquitoes with his feet, if need be, soaking in cold water, and be content after all that time with one "glorious nibble." To achieve the angler's ordinary successes may not require so much patience as he possessed who baited his hook with a "dragon's tail," and "sat upon a rock and bobbed for a whale;" but the fact is certain that those who are most expert in fishing are usually endowed with a large share of that stoicism which bears success and disappointment with the same evenness of temper. Old Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," tells of a Silesian nobleman who was found booted up to the groins, as he stood in the water fishing; and he adds that "many gentleman, in like sort, with us, will wade up to the arm-holes on such occasions, and voluntarily undertake that to satisfy their pleasure, which a poor man for a good stipend would scarce be hired to undergo." A late English writer says: "I remember a fisherman chiding me on account of my displeasure at not realizing the sport which had been promised; and he very coolly said that 'I should never make an angler; if I could not *fish a whole day in a bucket of water, without showing impatience.*'" The same writer tells us of a surgeon at Hampton, who is regarded as an example for all anglers in the manifestation of this quality, as he braves the coldest winter weather to pursue his favorite sport. "He gets up before it is light, and has his breakfast, and then fishes till dark, while the water is freezing on his line!" *That* is angling like a true votary of the craft! A Scottish writer (the charming author of "*Nugæ Criticæ*") tells of a battle-royal with a salmon five feet long, and which must have weighed fifty pounds, that lasted from four o'clock in the afternoon till four o'clock of a summer morning. Picture to yourself, if you can, the blank feeling of dismay which the fisher must have experienced, when, after that twelve hours' tug of war, his line "came in loose," and the conviction flashed across his mind that the monster was off!—ay,

——"turn thy complexion there,
Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin !"

No wonder that, in view of all these facts, many a theoretic angler, who has been charmed into a love of the amusement by the witchery of Walton's pages, has found it in practice the most tedious of all ways of killing time.

Honest Izaak justly declares that "he that hopes to be a good angler, must not only bring an inquiring, searching, observing wit, but he must bring a large measure of hope and patience, and a love and propensity to the art itself." Markham, in his "Country Contentments," goes still further, and quaintly assures us that "the angler must be a general scholar, and seen in all the liberal sciences; as a grammarian, to know how to write a discourse of his art, and in true and fitting terms. He should have sweetness of speech, to entice others to delight in an exercise so much laudable. He should have strength of argument to defend and maintain his profession against envy and slander. Then he must be strong and valiant, neither to be amazed with storms, nor affrighted with thunder; and if he is not temperate, but hath a gnawing stomach that will not endure much fasting, but must observe hours, it troubleth mind and body, and loseth that delight which maketh the pastime only pleasing." We may smile at this as fanciful; but it must, nevertheless, be acknowledged that there is, at least, a peculiar knack or expertness required to make one a proficient in this mystery or craft, —an art a genius for which, like that for painting or writing poetry, must be born in a man, and cannot be acquired. It is not every one who flourishes the lithe rod that can send the feathered line sailing high in the air, so as to alight just on the edge of an eddy, or near a root or stone, where "the hermit trout" is dreamily plying his bright fins, and slowly steering himself about in lazy enjoyment. Nor is it every man who knows how, when the graceful creature is hooked, to rein him in,—to play with

him as a cat does with a mouse,—guiding him hither and thither; now humoring his impetuous leaps and dashes; now tenderly coaxing him to the shore, and finally bringing him, with what Horace would call a *lene tormentum*, within reach of the gaff or landing-net. No; these are triumphs reserved for him who by his inborn faculty, added to years of practice of his craft, is able to "snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,"—the veteran angler.

Had Byron ever tried to grass a five-pound trout with "a line and leader as delicate as the finest hair from the tresses of a mountain sylph," he would never have ridiculed angling as "the coldest and stupidest of pretended sports." A cold and stupid sport! Could there be a more perfect misnomer for a craft that is not only full of the most varying excitement, but exacts the utmost intelligence and adroitness,—the keenest vigilance and the most delicate senses,—an eye ever quick and a hand ever ready? Did a "stupid" fly-fisher ever waylay and capture a salmon, or cheat the vigilance of the argus-eyed trout that startles at the faintest shadow? The angler's victories, in many cases, are among the most marvelous examples of the triumph of art over brute force. They are won not by the brutal superiority of sheer strength, but by instruments formed of materials so slight, and some of them so frail, that all the delicacy and cunning resources which human wit can devise are required to enable feebleness to overcome strength. The large, powerful, nervous salmon, "the monarch of the stream," with all his wondrous agility,—the quick darting trout, active, hardy, gamy, whose dying struggles show an unconquerable spirit,—are hooked, held in, wearied out, by the skilful and delicate management of tackle which, if roughly handled, would be bent and strained by the strength and weight of a minnow! "It is wonderful," says a writer, "to see hooks of Lilliputian largeness, gut finer than a hair, and a rod some of whose joints are little thicker than a crow's quill, employed in the capture of the strongest

river fish. * * * If the sporting gear of the fly-fisher were not managed with consummate art,—on the mathematical principle of leverage,—he could not by its means lift from the ground more than a minute fraction of the dead weight of that living, bounding, rushing fish he tires unto death, nay drowns in its own element."

Of all the forms of amusement which human wit has devised to "drive dull care away," we believe there is no one cheaper, or more healthful and innocent than angling. The trout-fisher, like the painter, haunts the loveliest nooks of the earth, and his soul takes its hue from the scenes with which he is familiar. Wandering far away from the dust and smoke of the town, into the quiet meadows and ravines, he follows up the sparkling brooks to their sources, and penetrates to the inmost recesses of Nature's sanctuaries. He has admittance to her boudoirs, and dallies with her in her most witching moods. He becomes familiar with the ceaseless changes of her countenance, varying from sunshine to tempest, and hears all the harmonies of her organ-like music. As he throws his line where "rivulets dance their wayward round," the song of the waters drowns all the jangling noises of the world he has left behind, and while he listens to the chorus of the wavelets, the sleepy whirr of the frog in the pool, or the occasional plash of the trout leaping for his prey, the misty, dreamy quiet all around laps his soul into a temporary Elysium. The shyest and most delicate wild-flowers, set in the golden and azure mosses, are revealed to his gaze. A brooding, meditative spirit takes possession of his soul, and he learns to discern the infinite suggestiveness of things. He worships, not in temples built by human hands, but in the temple of Nature,—

> "Not in that fane where crumbling arch and column
> Attest the feebleness of mortal hand,
> But in that fane, most catholic and solemn,
> Which God hath planned ;

"In that cathedral, boundless as our wonder,
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply,
Its choir the winds and waves, its organ thunder,
Its dome the sky."

Nor is his enjoyment limited to the hours when he sees the scarlet-spots flash within the meshes. He stores up in his memory the enchanting sights and sounds that ravish his eye and ear, to refresh his soul amid the din and dust of town life; and the green fields, the songs of the birds, the "bubbling runnels" leaping through ravines dark with the shade of overhanging foliage, haunt him like a passion. Even the shadows of old age are illumined by the recollection of these oases in life's sandy waste; and though the crow's feet may have crept into his eyes and the gout into his legs, he "fights his battles over again" among his brothers of the angle, dwelling on each feat of piscatory prowess with as much enthusiasm as if he had captured a fortress instead of a fish.

If you would know a man's character, you cannot do better than go a-fishing with him. Does he crow like chanticleer when he has caught a fish, and swear like a pirate when his fly has caught in the long grass, giving, perhaps, a violent jerk which breaks the top-joint of his rod, and spoils his temper for the whole day? *Hic niger est,—hunc tu, Romane, caveto!* Depend upon it, he will be an uncomfortable companion; you will find him insolent and overbearing in prosperity, sulky and savage in misfortune. Does he, after losing a fine fish which he has raised to the surface, quietly thrust a stick into the ground opposite the spot where he rose, and returning fifteen minutes after, again throw a fly and capture the backslider? Such a man, if balked in a love affair or a business scheme just on the eve of triumph, will await patiently a second trial, and probably win the prize he covets. Does he pull out his fish by main force, and impetuously send him flying over his head into the grass behind or into a thicket? We can easily foresee his fate in life,—that he will do

business without tact or finesse, in a harem-scarem, slap dash, devil-may-care way, and will win success, if at all, at the cost of great losses. Does he, after twenty minutes' vain endeavor to ensnare "the speckled beauties," sprawl under a tree, curse the weather, the fish, his tackle, and his luck, and, pulling out a flask, drown his vexations in old Rye or Bourbon ? He will be easily disheartened in his calling, and attributing his failures always to ill fortune, never to his own impatience or want of tact and skill, will soak and sulk himself into his grave.

There are some sentimental people who denounce fish-catching as cruelty. Leigh Hunt and Byron have both condemned it on this account. But if the angler is cruel because he catches the fish, what shall we say of the fish himself who starts up with his murderous jaws, and tries to swallow what he fancies to be a fly ? Evidently so far as the intent is concerned he is a murderer, only he is caught while trying to put his intent into execution. It is only by the artful imitation of the flies, upon which the trout or the salmon loves to feed, that the angler is able to capture him. Upon opening his stomach, you find it crammed with flies; or, if he is a large fish, you find that he has banqueted upon smaller ones. In fact, the smaller fish live in a constant fright on account of him; they fly to the shallows, hide among the weeds, and dread him as a lamb dreads a wolf, or a chicken a hen-hawk. The big fish is, in fact, a perfect cannibal,—an ogre; the blood-thirsty monster will devour not only his fellow, but even his blood-relations and his own children. It was this consideration that converted Dr. Franklin from vegetarianism to belief in an animal diet. "If you eat one another," he said to a fish, "I see no reason why we may not eat you." "There is an immense trout in Loch Awe, in Scotland," says a writer, "which is so voracious, and swallows his own species with such avidity, that he has obtained the name of *Salmo ferox*. I pull about this unnatural monster until he is tired, and give him the *coup-de-grâce*.

Is this cruelty? Cruelty should be made of sterner stuff."

It is a curious fact that the tender-hearted moralists, who croak so over the cruelty of angling, and think it a dreadful thing to trouble a trout with a line intimating that you would be happy to see him at supper, rarely refuse to eat a perch or trout well browned, and will even add the "cool malignity" of salt and sauce. To all such crabbed and hypercritical objectors we can only say with Horace that *jubemus stultos esse libenter*, while from our heart of hearts we echo the song of old Izaak:

> "A day with not too bright a beam,
> A warm, but not a scorching sun,
> A southern gale to curl the stream,
> And, master, half your work is done.
>
> "There, whilst behind some bush we wait
> The scaly people to betray,
> We'll prove it just, with treacherous bait,
> To make the preying trout our prey;—
>
> "And think ourselves, in such an hour,
> Happier than those, though not so high,
> Who, like leviathans, devour
> Of meaner men the smaller fry."

Intellectual Playfulness.

THE London "Saturday Review," speaking of the many pretty things said in play by Sydney Smith, remarks that none of the sayings of that obese angel of English wits throws so amiable a light on the essential vein of his intellect, its playfulness, as that recorded in the story of the pretty girl and the sweet peas. "Oh! Mr. Smith," the pretty girl said, who was visiting his garden with a party of friends, and pointing to some sweet peas, "those sweet peas have not yet come to perfection." "Then," said the witty divine and divine wit, "permit me to conduct perfection to the sweet peas." At first blush this looks like a bit of gallantry, of which any man might be guilty; but, "if we look into the sentiment closely," says the "Review," "and observe how delicate and complicated is its structure, and, though in its essence spontaneous, how ideal and polished is his wit, the gallantry falls entirely into the background, iced over, as it were, by the playfulness, and by the intellectual process which almost invariably acts as a refrigerator on the emotions."

Of all the qualities which lend a charm to greatness, there is no other,—true courtesy only excepted,—which so robes it in beauty as the one here indicated. By playfulness is meant that indescribable something "which, at particular times, surrounds particular people like an electric atmosphere, which gilds their thoughts, lends a perfume to the commonest sentiments, and for a time, translates those who fall under its spell into a kind of fairy land remote from the humdrum views, the jog-trot sequences, the little carking cares and little drivelling worries and apprehensions, the tiny rules and infinitesimal

points of honor, which almost inevitably beset average life at average moments." This quality is the last touch the finishing perfection, of a noble character; it is the gold on the spire, the sunlight on the cornfields, the smile on the cheek of the noble knight lowering his sword-point to his lady-love; and it can result only from the truest balance and harmony of soul. The best and greatest men in all ages have exhibited it; it was seen in Socrates, in Luther, in Cervantes, in Chaucer, in Sir Thomas More,—adding a bloom to the sterner graces of their characters, and shining forth with amaranthine brightness in their hours of darkness and gloom. Why is it so rare?

Perhaps one reason is, that the quality is so often confounded with a jesting disposition which in our days too often is found in excess, and allied with habitual flippancy and frivolity. There are persons who cannot speak of the most serious subjects except in terms provocative of merriment. The gravest themes of human contemplation suggest to them only comic images and associations, and a remark as gloomy as death will, in passing through their minds, acquire the motley livery of a harlequin. The most popular literature of the day is that which is dedicated to Momus and broad grins. The refined and delicate humor which once characterized our classic writers,—a humor which does not spring from the words alone, but has intense meanings underneath its grotesque sounds,—has given place to " laughter holding both his sides." Joking has become a trade. The cap and bells, which once, like greatness, were "thrust upon" a man, because he had a genius for joking, are now assumed with cold-blooded calculation. We have had "comic histories" of England and Rome, and "comic Blackstones" *ad nauseam*, and now we have a "Comic History of the United States." In England the rage for burlesques has almost banished high art from the theatres; and it is now thought to be a fine stroke of wit to call the mightiest of English writers by such titles as "the Divine Wil-

liams," or "the Avon party." This superfœtation of fun has disgusted many with all fun. They feel that this incessant rattle,—this ceaseless jesting upon even the gravest themes,—must ultimately lessen a man's own sense of the real gravity of human life, and weaken the strength and authority of the moral convictions of those who are always listening to it. Barrow, of whom it has been said that he himself might have outshone, had he chosen to do it, all the wits of Charles's Court, and beaten them with weapons like their own, but of a more dazzling blade, a keener edge, and finer temper, has treated this folly with the contempt it merits. "What more plain nonsense can there be," he asks, "than to be earnest in jest, to be continual in divertisement, or constant in pastime, to make extravagance all our play, and sauce all our diet? Is not this plainly the life of a child, that is ever busy, yet never hath anything to do? or the life of that mimical brute, which is always active in playing uncouth and unlucky tricks, which, could it speak, might surely pass well for a professed wit?" It is plain that those who find their delight in this jibing and vulgarizing spirit confound true humor with facetiousness. The one is "a gracious as well as tricksy spirit;" the other is often "terribly like the grinning of a death's head."

There is another class of persons—grim, prosaic, matter-of-fact men—who, owing to some twist of the brain, cannot understand the quality we have commended. The language of pleasantry is to them an unknown tongue. Not only do they fail to detect the good will which wears the mask of satire, but it is lucky if they do not interpret your circuitous compliments as direct insults, and a design to cheer and amuse into a deliberate intention to sting and wound. It is said that a tribe called Weddahs has lately been discovered in Ceylon, who never laugh, and who know no more what a joke is than does a horse; and even in civilized countries there are many persons who are not more happy in their mental constitution. Sir

William Harcourt quotes Canning as saying of the most conservative class in England: "The country gentleman suspected wit meant something against the land, and solid commercial men thought it had a tendency to depreciate consols."

We have known some of these people,—lean, lathy, crabbed, dyspeptic beings,—who think that two and two always make four, and can never possibly make five; and we have sometimes thought that the best way to address them would be to abstain from all irony, and to roll into their spiny natures a few floods of billowy mirth. It was one of these hard, prosaic men, who cannot understand a joke even when it is as unequivocal as a pistol-shot, that read Knickerbocker's History of New York, and said on closing it, that it was far inferior to the works of Hildreth and Bancroft, and contained many things which he found it difficult to believe. Miss Coppe, in her "Work and Play," tells of an Englishman of this stamp, to whom a friend described the scene when Sheridan was picked up dead drunk, and, being asked his name and address, stammered out, "My name is Wil-Wil-Wilberforce." The serious gentleman, after a few moments consideration, looked up and asked his fair informant, "What *did* Sheridan mean?" Sydney Smith saw one of this class sitting beside him at a dinner-party, and plied him with a joke. The man sat grim over it for some five minutes, trying to extract its meaning. At last he looked up and exclaimed, "Why, Mr. Smith, you probably intended that for a joke." "I didn't intend it for anything else," was the reply; whereupon the solemn gentleman began to laugh, and couldn't stop, doubtless discovering, for the first time in his life, that things have a funny side. Many will remember a similar misadventure which befell poor Smith when he told a lady visitor that he found the weather so hot that he was actually obliged to take off his flesh and sit in his bones. "Oh! Mr. Smith," answered the lady, in consternation, "how *could* you do that?"

We were once traveling by rail along the left bank of the Seine in France, with an English family, and hearing the mother ask her son if he would not like "to go in swimming" in that river, we said: "It is not possible that your son would do such a thing as that." "Why not?" was the reply. "Because," we said, "he would be crazy if he did it." "Crazy? how crazy, pray?" "Why, madam," we replied, "he would be *in Seine*, would he not?" "H-o-w i-n-s-a-n-e?" she asked, with a mingled look of curiosity and surprise. Natures like this, that seem so poor and thin, have often juice enough latent within them; but as some one has said, it is at the bottom and undissolved. It needs shaking up, in order to impart richness and flavor to their whole being, and save them from bigotry and meanness; and if you can once get a flood of humor fairly to sweep through them, the end may probably be gained.

There is a third class of men who abstain from all exhibitions of playfulness because it is not "respectable." They have, or think they have, a portentous amount of dignity, and are fearful of sacrificing the most infinitesimal portion of it. Thomas Fuller knew some such in his day, who, "for fear their orations should giggle, would not let them smile." It is evident that Dr. Franklin did not belong to this class, since we are told that the drawing up of the Declaration of Independence would have been committed to him, if it had not been feared that he would "put a joke into it." Nor did Abraham Lincoln belong to it, whose memory has been saved from a taint of levity only by his martyrdom. William Pitt did be long to it, if we may believe the author of "Caxtonia," who says that he rigidly subdued his native faculty of wit, from motives of policy. It was not that he did not appreciate and admire its sparkles in orators unrestrained by the responsibilities of office, but because he considered that a man in the position of First Minister impairs influence and authority by the cheers which transfer his reputation from his rank as Minister to his renown as wit.

Doubtless there is force in this. Grave situations, as Bulwer remarks, are not only dignified but strengthened by that gravity of demeanor which is not the hypocrisy of the would-be wise, but the genuine token of the earnest sense of responsibility. There was deep wisdom in the Athenian law which interdicted a judge of the Areopagus from writing a comedy. Yet as a general thing, it is none the less true that, as "there is beggary in the love that can be reckoned," so there is degradation in the dignity that has to be preserved. If one has the real article, he may safely leave it to take care of itself; and if he has not, no prodigality of starch, or snowdrift of white-linen decency, will supply a substitute. Certainly, there can be no greater mistake than to associate frivolity of character with sportiveness. We are not to suppose that the elephant's trunk is incapable of felling a man because we see it toying with a feather; we do not conclude that the oak wants stability because its light and changeable leaves dance to the music of the breeze; nor may we conclude that a man wants solidity and strength of mind because he may be occasionally playful. Yet, somehow, the man who goes through the world with an owl-like solemnity of face is always thought to be showing a deeper sense of the meaning of life, and to be making more of his talents, than the elastic, sunny, playful man. There are persons who would ever afterward have refused to credit Sidney Smith with the possession of sterling intellectual qualities, had they heard his pleasantry about "a giraffe with a sore throat." "Fancy," he said, once, sitting quietly at the deanery of St. Paul's with some ladies, when he was told that one of the giraffes at the Zoological Gardens had caught a cold,—"fancy a giraffe with a yard of sore throat!"

A Plea for the Erring.

THERE are few subjects upon which men are so likely to err in forming their judgments as in estimating the degrees of guilt involved in the conduct of their erring and depraved fellow men. Especially is this the case when the judgments are passed upon the poor and the outcast,—the unhappy persons who from infancy have lived in daily communion with wretchedness and vice. In spite of Canning's sneer at the nice judge who

> "—found with keen, discriminating sight,
> Black's not so black, nor white so very white,"

the doctrine thus ridiculed is nevertheless true in morals, if not in physics; and not to recognize it is to incur the risk of undue harshness in our estimates of our fellow-men. If there is any one lesson which frequent intercourse with them teaches, it is the folly of attempting nicely to classify their characters, so as to place them distinctly among the sheep or the goats. Here and there a man is found who is almost wholly bad, and another who is almost wholly good; but, in the infinite majority of cases, the problem is so complex as to defy all our powers of analysis. A young men's debating society may easily enough resolve that some famous man or woman was worthy of approbation or of reprobation; but men of experience, who have learned the infinite complexity of human nature, know that a just judgment of human beings is not to be packed into any such summary formula. Even in judging our friends, whom we see daily, we make the grossest mistakes; they are constantly startling us by acts

which show us how little we know of the fathomless depths of their moral being. How, then, can we expect to judge accurately of those who are utter strangers to us, and by what right do we presume to place them irrevocably in our moral pigeon-holes?

It is difficult to say how far in our judgments of the vilest men, —or those who seem to be such,—allowance should be made for perplexing circumstances, for temptations which we have never experienced, and for motives which we can but partially analyze. Certain it is that they who, from their earliest years, have lived always in affluence,—who have never known the cravings of a hunger that they knew not how to satisfy,—who have been supplied with a constant succession of innocent pleasures to relieve the monotony of life, and with all the appliances of art to cheat pain of its sting,—have but a faint conception of the privations and anxieties, the irritating and maddening thoughts, that torture the victim of poverty, and drive him, with an impulse dreadfully strong, to deeds of darkness and blood. Well did Maggie Mucklebacket, in Scott's novel, retort to the Laird of Monkbarns, when he expressed a hope that the distilleries would never work again: "Ay, it is easy for your honor, and the like o' you gentle folks, to say sae, that hae stouth and routh, and fire and fending, and meat and claith, and sit dry and canny by the fireside; but an ye wanted fire, and meat, and dry claise, and were deeing o' cauld, and had a sair heart into the bargain, which is warst ava, wi' just tippence in your pouch, wadna ye be glad to buy a dram wi't, to be eilding, and claise, and a supper, and heart's ease into the bargain, till the morn's morning?" We may not admit the strict logic of this appeal, for the dram is too often the cause, as well as the effect, of the absence of fire, and meat, and heart's ease; but the fact upon which the poly-petticoated philosopher insists so pathetically, is unquestionably a key, not only to nine-tenths of the vices, but also to many of the darkest crimes, that stain the annals of the poor.

Easy, indeed, is it, for such persons as Maggie describes, —those for whom a serene and quiet life has been provided by fortune,—who are free from all harassing cares, —their livelier and more errant feelings all stilled down into torpidity,—with not even any tastes to lead astray, —nothing, in short, to do but to live a life of substantial comfort within the easy bounds which worldly wisdom prescribes,—easy is it for all these sleek and well-fed members of the venerable corps of "excessively good and rigidly righteous people," as Burns calls them,—

> "Whose life is like a weal gaun mill,—
> Supplied wi' store o' water,
> The heapet happer's ebbing still,
> And still the clap plays clatter,"—

to abstain from vice and crime; for were THEY to be guilty of the outrageous sins of the distressed and tempted, they would be monsters indeed. But before such sit in judgment on their fellow-men,

> "Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
> Their failings and mischances,"

or boast of keeping their own feet within the prescribed bounds of virtue, would they not do well to ask themselves how many inward struggles this negative merit has cost them, or whether their circumstances were not such as to render temptation to any glaring error impossible?

It is said that John Bunyan, seeing a drunkard staggering along the street, exclaimed. "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Bunyan!" "Tolerance," says Goethe, "comes with age. I see no fault committed that I myself could not have committed at some time or other." Truly, we have but to look into our own hearts to find the germ of many a crime which only our more favored circumstances have prevented us from committing; and

would we ponder on this thought with a wise humility, it might teach us, not to palliate or excuse, but "more gently to scan our fellow man,"—to judge mercifully of the sinner while we hate the sin,—and, above all, meekly to thank God, not that we are better than other men, but that we, too, have not been brought into temptations too fiery for our strength. "No man says the large-hearted poet, Burns, "can say in what degree any other persons, besides himself, can be with strict justice called *wicked.* Let any of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us examine impartially how many vices he has not been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped because he was out of the line of such temptation; and what often, if not always, weighs more than all the rest, how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all; I say, any man who can thus think may view the faults and crimes of mankind around him with a brother's eye."

It was in a land of harsh moralists, and in an age when little pity was shown to the erring, that Burns wrote these words; but, though in these days a great advance has been made, it is doubtful if we yet have sufficient sympathy for those who stray from the paths of virtue. We need again and again to be reminded that the bad are not *all* bad; that there is "a soul of goodness in things evil;" and that in balancing the ledger of human conduct, we should make as large subtraction from the bad man's debit side, as from the good man's credit side, of the account. Not more true is it that there are many "mute, inglorious Miltons," or "village Hampdens," whose lofty intellectual powers, like the music of an untouched instrument, have remained dormant for the want of circumstances to call them forth, than that there sleep in the breast of many an innocent man impulses and tendencies of a wicked character, which need but the breath of oc-

casion to start them into a giant life. The pregnant story of Hazel furnishes not the only instance of a nature which, in ordinary circumstances, was shocked at every imputation of wrong, and yet, when clothed with despotic authority, exhibited all the odious features of the oppressor and the tyrant. "Nature," says the sententious Bacon, "may be buried a great while, and yet revive upon the occasion of temptation; like as it was with Æsop's damsel, turned from a cat to a woman, who sat demurely at the board's end till a mouse ran before her."

It is a striking fact, noted by Sir Arthur Helps, that the man in all England whose duty it is to know most about crime, has been heard to say that he finds more and more to excuse in men, and thinks better of human nature, even after tracking it through the most perverse and intolerable courses. It is the man who has seen most of his fellows, who is most tolerant of his fellow man. In the great Battle of Life, we may see many a fellow creature fall beneath a temptation which from our own shield would have glanced harmless; but let us reflect that, though we might have been adamant to this, there are a thousand other darts of Satan, better suited to our natures, by which, though pressing with less crushing force, we might have perished without a struggle. Only the All-Seeing Eye can discern how far the virtues of any one are owing to a happy temperament, or from how many vices he abstains, not from any care or vigilance, but, as Burns says, "for want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening."

When Henry Martyn was in college, he was such a slave to anger that he one day hurled a knife with all his force at a fellow student, which might have killed or fearfully mutilated him, had it not missed the mark, and stuck in the wainscot of the room, "Martyn," exclaimed his friend, in consternation, "if you do not learn to govern your temper, you will one day be hanged for murder!" He *did* learn to govern it; became meek and humble;

won high honors in college; went to India as a missionary; distinguished himself as a linguist; translated the Testament into several languages; and died, after doing and enduring a vast deal to rescue the East from the darkness of Paganism. What, if with his sensitive and fiery organism, he had been born amid the squalor and vice of St. Giles? Or, who can say what Martin Luther would have become, if, born as he was with organs of destructiveness like those of a bull-dog, he had not been led by his religious training to employ his destructive energies in killing error instead of in killing human beings? An English writer was so struck with the prodigious energy, and the native feral force, of Chalmers, that he declared that had it not been intellectualized and sanctified, it would have made him, who was the greatest of orators, the strongest of ruffians, a mighty murderer upon the earth. On the other hand, who does not remember that even Nero, at one time of his life, could lament that he knew how to read or write, when called on to sign a death-warrant? The colliers of Bristol had been noted for ages as among the most hardened and profligate of beings, till Whitefield touched them one day with the wand of his magic eloquence. Even a Nelly Sykes, amid the grossest degradation, could do many virtuous actions; and the stern Milton has said that "it was from the rind of one apple that the knowledge of good and evil, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world." Moderate then, O thou stern moralist, thy harsh and unrelenting views of human guilt:—

> "Still mark if vice or nature prompts the deed;
> Still mark the strong temptation and the need;
> On pressing want, on famine's powerful call,
> At least more lenient let thy justice fall;
> For him, who, lost to every hope of life,
> Has long with fortune held unequal strife,
> Known to no human love, no human care,
> The friendless, homeless object of despair;

For the poor vagrant feel, while he complains,
Nor from sad freedom send to sadder chains.
Alike if fortune or misfortune brought
Those last of woes his evil days have wrought ;
Believe, with social mercy and with me,
Folly's misfortune in the first degree."

The Secret of Longevity.

IS it not surprising that, notwithstanding all that has been written on the subject of longevity, so little is really known of the causes and conditions of long life? A few general hints may be gathered from the records of centenarians, but no exact or satisfactory knowledge. Sir G. C. Lewis, who carefully investigated the subject, positively denied that any *man* ever reached a hundred years, though he was nearly convinced that there were in his day some authentic cases of female centenarianism. His great argument for his position was, that since the Christian era no person of royal or noble birth has been alleged to have reached the magic limit. Just as the giants of antiquity, seen through the mist and fog of ages, loom up in preternatural proportions, and dwindle as we draw near the light of modern times, so the lives of the centenarians swell or diminish in length as we advance toward or recede from the prehistoric times. If it be argued that kings and nobles have been exposed to greater dangers and more exhausting labors than other men,—that the cares of state, the fierce contentions of politics, the brain-work incident to tangled affairs and court cabals, cut short their days,—it may be urged on the other hand, that the higher the rank, the greater the care with which they would be nursed, the better the medical attendance, the food, air, clothing, and all the other conditions on which health and longevity are supposed to depend. It must be admitted that the higher a man's rank, the greater is the chance of accuracy in respect to dates; and that if, in all the cases which can be easily attested, centenarianism has been found to be a

myth, there is, at least, a strong presumption against the obscure centenarians who grow up in places where the system of registration is unknown, and where skepticism is less common than credulity and love for the marvelous.

This presumption, however, is liable to be rebutted by facts; and we think they exist in sufficient abundance not only to overthrow it, but to prove centenarianism beyond all reasonable doubt. To go back no farther than the Romans, Pliny states, from the record of a census taken during the reign of Vespasian,—a source of information entirely trustworthy,—that there were living, in the year 76 in Italy, in the district between the Appenines and the Po, 124 persons who had attained the age of 100 years and upward. Three of them had lived to 140. Haller long ago declared that more than 1,100 persons had been known to have reached to various ages between 100 and 169. Thomas Bailey's book, "Record of Longevity," published in 1857, contains the names of about 4,000 centenarians, and Dr. Van Oven has collected notices of 6,201. Of the latter we have the names, country, condition, and date of death, of 99 who reached the age of 130; of 37 who lived to be 140 years old; of 11 who reached 150; and of 17 who exceeded a century and a half. Henry Jenkins, a witness in an English court, swore to a hundred and fifty years' memory, and died at 169. The Countess of Desmond, of whom it is said that

> "She lived to much more than a hundred and ten,
> And died from the fall of a cherry-tree then,"

was known to Sir Walter Raleigh, though she had lived in the time of Edward the Fourth. Lord Bacon says that she cut three sets of teeth, and lived to the age of 140,—the age of Galen. Lord Brougham had a great-aunt who died in 1789 at the age of 106. Allen's American Biographical Dictionary gives the names of more than 200 centenarians. Among them are Abraham Bogart who

died in Tennesee, in 1833, at the age of 118, and Francis Age who died in Pennsylvania in 1767, aged 134. Some of our readers will recall Judge Basil Hamilton, the Kalamazoo centenarian, who died a few years ago at the age of 103. He was one of a family of twenty-three children and had seventeen of his own. Mrs. Peggy Hatch died in November, 1878, in Waterville, Maine, at the age of ninety-nine years and two months. Mrs. Moses Studley, of Bremen, Maine, is said to be nearly 106 years old. She was born May 25, 1774, and has not been sick for three years. According to the records of the town of York, Maine, Stephen Goodale, who died recently at the poor-house of the town, lived to the age of 118. He was a native of York, and had spent in the poor-house forty-two years. We will cite but two cases more, which, if they can be credited, are among the most extraordinary on record. In January, 1865, two men died,—one in France, and the other in the United States,—whose united ages are said to have reached the startling number of *two hundred and seventy years!* The former, Antoine Sauvé, a native of Normandy, was an old artillery soldier, who attained to the age of 130 years; the other, Joseph Crele, who was born near Detroit in 1725, died at Caledonia, Wisconsin, at the age of 140. Sauvé's father fought against Marlborough at Ramilies, on May 3, 1706, and his elder brother, Peter Sauvé, helped Marshal Saxe to gain the bloody victory of Fontenoy in 1745. Crele was seven years old at the birth of Washington, and fifty at the opening of the American Revolution, so that he might have claimed exemption on the score of age, from military service. These cases, taken together, however incredible some of them may be, seem conclusive. Granting that many of them are not sufficiently authenticated, yet after the utmost allowance has been made for errors, misstatements, and wilful exaggerations, enough remain to establish the truth of ultra-longevity, even to many years over a century, beyond all rational doubt.

But what are the conditions of longevity, so far as we can gather them from the known cases? Are agricultural districts more favorable than manufacturing,—the fresh, open country than the crowded city,—mild climates than those whose skies are perpetually scowling? Statistics, well authenticated reports on sickness and mortality, say no; rural districts have, at most, the advantage of one in two hundred deaths above city districts, and one in five hundred above the town. Against the overcrowding, the bad air, the noise and excitement, and the liability to accident, in the cities, are set the better water, the greater variety of food, the better knowledge of the laws of health, the more accessible and skilful medical aid,—so that the advantages and disadvantages are nearly balanced. Hot climates have no superiority over cold; China is more unhealthy than Norway, Iceland, or Greenland. Is exercise a vital condition of longevity? It seems not, in view of the fact that a vicar cited by the London Quarterly Review, Rev. William Davies, reached 105, though his only exercise for the last thirty-five years was to slip one foot before another from room to room. Men have lived a hundred years and upward who only taxed their physical powers to walk a hundred yards a day, from house to office and back. Is temperance, or total abstinence from alcohol, essential? The best answer to this question is the reply of the nonagenarian to the teetotaler, who, hunting for statistics to fortify his views, asked the aged man the secret of his long life? "I have heard," said the enemy of alcohol, "that you have been very regular in your habits; is it so?" The patriarch admitted the regularity, but added that it consisted in regularly chewing tobacco, "liquoring up" with the regularity of a steam-engine, and regularly going to bed drunk. Some of the toughest constitutions, resembling lignum-vitæ in their texture, have been possessed by old soakers who were hardly ever sober except when they were drunk. Daniel Bull M'Carty, of Kerry, Ireland, who drank freely of undiluted rum and brandy during the

last seventy years of his life, died in 1752 at the age of 111 George Kirton, of Oxnop Hall, Yorkshire, who died in 1764, aged 120, was also a hard drinker. William Hirst a farm laborer, of Micklefield, Yorkshire, who died very old in 1853, considered rum the balm of his life, and spent for it all the money he received from the parish.

Is a proper diet a *sine qua non* of longevity? All writers on health denounce newly made, and especially hot, bread, and not a few discourage the use of tea and coffee. Yet Mr. Davies, the rector of whom we have spoken, breakfasted heartily on *hot rolls, well buttered,* ate hot roast meat at supper, and drank wine to the last, though never in excess. He suffered neither from gout, stone, paralysis, rheumatism, nor from any other of the besetting diseases of old age, but died in the full possession of all his faculties, mental and physical, but his eye-sight. "Like most long livers, he was very short of stature." Shall we declare that long life depends on "tubbing," or personal cleanliness? What shall we say, then, of the case of "Lady" Lewson, an eccentric London widow, who reached the age of 106, though she was a mortal foe to cleanliness? She never washed her rooms, nor bathed, declaring that people who did the latter were "always catching cold"; but she habitually smeared her face and neck with hog's lard, and her cheeks with rouge. Elizabeth Durieux, a woman of Savoy, though filthy in her habits, reached 119; and it is affirmed of the Icelanders, that though they are very uncleanly, and suffer much from skin diseases, leprosy in particular, their average longevity exceeds that of the continental nations of Europe. "But health," we hear some one say, "is surely a condition of great length of days." Not at all. Longevity is no more dependent upon health than upon great muscularity. The Tom Sayers and Heenans, the great prize-fighters and heavy-weight lifters, men of brawny muscles, who can fell an ox with their fists, are almost always ailing, and rarely live to sixty or even fifty. The late Dr. Winship, of Boston, who could

lift three thousand pounds weight, died at forty-two. Lewis Cornaro, who contrived to spin out the thread of existence to one hundred, had so sickly a constitution, and indulged in such excesses, that, when thirty-five, he was told by his doctors that he could not live over two years. Changing his habits, and limiting himself to twelve ounces of solid food a day, he became comparatively vigorous and hale; and he tells us that when one day he took fourteen ounces of food, and two extra ounces of wine, the addition to his ordinary allowance nearly cost him his life. The celebrated Galen had a weak and delicate constitution, yet by strict temperance and evenness of temper, lived one hundred and forty years. His rule in eating was to rise from the table always while his appetite was uncloyed. "The three oldest people I ever knew," says Dr. R. Southey in the London Lancet, "women, who reached respectively eighty-nine, ninety-eight, and one hundred, were valetudinarians, and had been so nearly all their lives."

In spite of all these facts, however, it is hard to believe that virtuous habits, abstemiousness, exercise, and cleanliness, do not conduce to longevity. But the one thing which outweighs all other favorable circumstances, is what Sir John Sinclair calls "a certain bodily and mental predisposition to longevity." There are persons who, as Sir Thomas Browne quaintly says, are "prefigured unto a long duration." In other words, they have a *genius* for it. Like any other gift, it may be cultivated; like any other, it may be squandered; but it exists independently of all cultivation, and no care can supply its place. Those who have this gift, which is inherited, will commonly reach old age, though they trample on the laws of health; while those who have it not will die comparatively early, in spite of the utmost regularity of life, and the strictest precautions against disease. Temperance, sobriety, and industry, however desirable and estimable, though they will prolong existence, will not insure to the latter a long life, because they lack natural strength of organization; while, on the

other hand, those who are endowed with the necessary inherent stamina will hold out in spite of their excesses and irregularities, because, though they draw more largely on their resources than the others, they begin life with a vast capital.

One of the most sensible sayings on the art of longevity that have fallen under our notice,—so far as longevity can be considered attainable,—was that given by an Italian in his one hundreth and sixteenth year. Being asked the secret of his living so long, he replied with that improvisation for which his countrymen are so noted,—

> "When hungry, of the best I eat,
> And dry and warm I keep my feet;
> I screen my head from sun and rain,
> And let few cares perplex my brain."

In these lines, especially in the last, we have the quintessence of all the advice that has been, or can be, given on the subject. The deadliest foe to longevity is excitement. "To live long," says Cicero, "it is necessary to live slowly." It is well known in the case of ordinary machines, that no evolution of force can take place with undue rapidity without damage to the machine in which the transformation takes place. Express railway stock, for example, is worn out much sooner than that which is reserved for slower traffic. The law is universal that intensity and duration of action are inversely proportional, and it applies not less rigorously to the human machine than to any other. Every man is born with a certain stock of vitality, which cannot be increased, but which may be expended or husbanded, as he deems best. Within certain limits he has his choice, to live fast or slow, to live extensively or intensively, to draw his little amount of life over a large space, or to condense it into a narrower one; but when his stock is exhausted he has no more. He who lives extensively, who avoids all stimulants, takes light and agreeable exercise, never overtasks him-

self, indulges no exhausting passions, feeds his mind and heart with no exciting material, has no debilitating pleasures, lets nothing ruffle his temper, "keeps his accounts with God and man daily squared up,"—is sure, if he has a good organism, to spin out his life, barring accidents, to the longest limit to which it is possible to attain; while he who lives intensely,—who feeds on highly seasoned food, whether material or mental, fatigues his body or brain by hard labor, exposes himself to inflammatory diseases, seeks continual excitement, gives loose rein to his passions, frets at every trouble, and enjoys little repose,—is burning the candle at both ends, and is sure to shorten his days. Gen. James Grant Wilson, in his sketch of the poet W. C. Bryant's life, tells us that when he asked him the secret of his health and vigor at eighty and upward, the poet replied: "It is all summed up in one word,—*moderation*. As you know, I am a moderate eater and drinker, moderate in my work, as well as in my pleasures." Cornaro, of whom we have already spoken, was similarly temperate; he ate so little, at last, that he required only an egg a day. On the other hand, how many a young man squanders on a holiday or an evening's entertainment an amount of nervous energy which he will bitterly feel the want of when he is fifty or sixty! It is curious but true, as some writer says, that a bottle of champagne at twenty may intensify the rheumatism at threescore; and that overtasking the eye at fourteen may necessitate spectacles at forty, instead of at sixty.

Even warm affections are prejudicial; they subject the owner to constant anxiety, and are as wearing as the excitement produced by politics or gambling. Nothing is more exhausting than anxiety for a sick wife or child, or nursing a friend through a long sickness, unless, as an English writer cynically says, "you can say with a good conscience that you don't take much interest in the result, and that you can put him out of your mind, and retire calmly to rest at a moment's notice." When "a fine old

man" was mentioned in Swift's presence, he exclaimed angrily, but with too much truth: "There's no such thing; if his head or heart had been worth anything, they would have worn him out long ago." In the same spirit Wordsworth, who lingered on till he was eighty, complains:

> "Oh, but the good die first,
> And we whose hearts are dry as summer dust,
> Burn to the socket."

The poet Rogers was a striking exception to Swift's remark; at least, till he was ninety years old. He then gradually dropped into that state which makes one query whether a prolonged life be a blessing:

> "Omni
> Membrorum damno major dementia, quæ nec
> Nomina servorum, nec vultus agnoscit amicum,
> Cum queis præteritâ cœnavit nocte, nec illos
> Quos genuit, quos eduxit."

On the other hand, "ugly" people, vulgarly so-called, often live to great age because they know nothing of the wear and tear of sympathy, and because the very intensity of their ill-nature shows that they have stamina.

Again, on the theory that our pulse is to beat a certain definite number of times, and that every instinct which makes it beat quicker only makes the candle burn the faster, even our fine enthusiasms, if they exceed a gentle glow, and rise into brilliancy or intensity, are costly, and lessen the number of moments we have to live. And if this be so, *à fortiori* how wearing must be the difficulty of brain-work, the toil of invention, the worry of leadership, the distraction of numerous sympathies, the perplexity of nice judgment, or the arduousness of any great virtue! How few men learn, till it is too late, that their intellectual and emotional natures are subject to laws as stringent and inflexible, in every particular, as those that

regulate their bodily functions? How few clergymen, lawyers, and busy men on 'change and boards of trade realize that the dyspepsia, in any of its protean forms, with which they may be afflicted, and which is leading to impaired nutrition or structural change, is the direct and inevitable result of the mental strain,—the ceaseless turmoil of brain,—to which they have for years subjected themselves! How often has the completion of a fortune or an intellectual masterpiece been followed by the death of the business man or the master! Some years ago a gentleman in England set himself to ascertaining the causes of the premature deaths of his acquaintances who had been cut off within twelve years. Of forty individuals he found that twenty had died from excessive mental labor or excitement, and twelve of these were not intellectual laborers, but men of the world. Sydenham tells us that one of the severest fits of gout he ever suffered from, arose from great mental labor undergone in composing his treatise on that disease.

Providence has appointed the succession of labor, and rest, by the alternation of day and night; yet how many violate this beneficent law by turning night into day, and day into night! They sleep while the sun is shedding his life-giving beams, and work amid the deadly influences of darkness. Many who are scrupulous not to toil at their callings in the night-time, yet imagine that they may do a full day's work, and afterward with impunity spend half or quarter of a night in charitable labor, or in the pursuit of pleasure or knowledge. But nature cannot be so cheated or outwitted. Though a bounteous giver, she is a hard bargainer, and never remits a debt or forgives an error. Occasionally she lets an offender escape for forty or fifty years even, but she is evermore "shadowing" him, and, hauling him up at last, inflicts her penalty just when and where he least anticipates it.

While all excess is injurious, it must not be inferred that hard brain-work alone, apart from other causes, tends

to shorten life. Mental labor, taken by itself, apart from griefs and fears, from forced or voluntary stinting of the body's needed supply of exercise, food or sleep, and the mind's supply of social intercourse, rather prolongs life than cuts short or frays its thread. Even overwork of the brain is probably far less injurious than underwork, "that rare and obscure calamity from which nobody is supposed to suffer." Nine-tenths of the students and professional men who are supposed to break down from intense toil, wear their brains out, not by repletion of study, but by the privation of something else. It is not the brain-work that saps the strength and disorders the nerves, but the constant and wilful violation of the laws of nature. It is well known to college officers of much experience, that the chief mortality among the graduates and under-graduates is not in the ranks of the workers, but of the idlers; not among the conscientious students, but among the aimless, the lazy, and the dissipated. The biographies of famous intellectual workers, of all ages and countries, show conclusively that devotion to mental pursuits, even of the severest character, by those who are accustomed to them, is not incompatible with longevity. Some of the hardest toilers of the brain have lived long lives, terminating in a serene and cloudless sunset.

Lord Brougham, who did the work of half-a-dozen men, lived eighty-nine years. Lord Lyndhurst wore out at ninety-one. Epimenides, the seventh of the wise men, is said to have lived to one hundred and fifty-four; Hippocrates, a prodigious worker, reached ninety-nine. Zeno, the stoic, killed himself at ninety-eight. Pythagoras, Quintilian, and Juvenal, reached fourscore, and Chrysippus died of laughter at the same age. Goethe attained to his eighty-second year; Corneille and Crabbe each to seventy-eight; the poet Young and Dr. Franklin to eighty-four; Colley Cibber to eighty-six; La Fontaine to seventy-four; Joanna Baillie to ninety; Montgomery, the poet, to eighty-two; Sydney Smith to seventy-six; Hannah

More to eighty-eight; Sir Isaac Newton to eighty-five; and Humboldt to nearly eighty-six, toiling to the last with all the enthusiasm of his early years. Bentley, Hobbes, Parr, Neander, and Heyne, reached ages between seventy-eight and ninety-one. Rogers, the banker-poet, attained to ninety-two; Grote, the banker-historian, held out to seventy-six. Fontenelle, famed for his universality, lived a century, and when asked at the close of his long and brilliant career if he felt pain, replied, "I only feel the difficulty of existing." As he was nearing his hundredth year, a friend who was ninety said to him: "Death, I think, has forgotten us." "Hush!" said Fontenelle, putting his finger to his lips; "He may overhear us." Lord Chesterfield, the courtier, orator, and wit,—the model of politeness, and the oracle of taste,—gave up the ghost at seventy-nine with the characteristic remark, "Tyrawley and myself have been dead these two years, but we do not wish it to be known." Dr. Beard, of New York, in an able paper on the "Longevity of Brain-Workers," has proved, beyond even the shadow of a doubt, that the world's hardest workers, so far from being short-lived, show a very high average of life,—a far higher average than the world's drones, and those who had added nothing to its accumulated capital of happiness, knowledge, goodness, and truth. After examining the age attained by five hundred of the most eminent men in history, including many who, like Raphael, Pascal, Mozart, Byron, and Keats, died young, he found the average age of these eminent men to be sixty-four years and between two and three months. Even of these long livers, it is altogether probable that not a few might have materially lengthened their days by taking more exercise and sleep, and by economizing more carefully, their expenditure of intellectual and moral energy.

The annual necrologies of our colleges and professional schools yield still further testimony to the point in question. At a recent commencement of Brown University,

it was found that of thirty-one graduates who had died during the year, and many of whom had filled eminent offices, the average was nearly threescore and ten. Of the class of 1826, seven of which met to celebrate their fiftieth anniversary, it was found that twelve of the twenty-eight who graduated were still living, and that the united ages of the seven present exceeded five hundred. Dr. Madden justly observes that "every pursuit which ennobles the mind has a tendency to invigorate the body, and, by its tranquillizing influence, to add to the duration of life." That mental application is one of the most effective means of relieving bodily pain, and that it is especially fitted to soothe the ruffled spirit, and to mitigate the asperity of corroding anxiety and care, is known to every scholar. When Burton found that his health and mind were failing, he began his "Anatomy of Melancholy," a marvel of quaint, out-of-the-way learning, and spun out his thread,—cut by himself, at last,—to sixty-four. Cowper, whose brains were "lined with black," as Burton would say, cheated them of their melancholy with "John Gilpin" and the "Task," and eked out his threescore and ten. Bacon, in his "History of Life and Death," is emphatic in declaring the religious and the literary to be among the forms of life the most conducive to longevity. "There are in this kind of life" (the religious), says he, "these things, leisure, admiration, and contemplation of heavenly things, joys not sensual, noble hopes, wholesome fears, sweet sorrows. Lastly, continual renovation by observances, penances, expiations, all of which are very powerful to the prolongation of life." The literary life, he says, "is led in leisure, and in those thoughts which, seeing that they are severed from the affairs of the world, bite not, but rather delight through their variety and impertinency."

It is not the severe mental pursuit, but, as a writer in the British Quarterly Review truly says, the pursuit followed without interest that weighs down the most elastic

mind and weighs out the toughest body. "It is the wearisome music lesson, toiled over by the scholar with neither taste nor ear; the drudgery of committing to memory long lists of names, which to the learner are only names; the prosing geographical lessons, where the most interesting scenes call up no pictures for the imagination to dwell upon; the historical lecture where, instead of living and breathing men and women, the student is cheated with the mere dry bones of some historical epitome. These constitute 'hard work,' that useless, thankless hard work that frets and injures the fine texture of the brain, and which, as a high medical authority has told us, is the case with all wearisome, toilsome, lengthened, mental labor."

There is a popular notion, which has long been deeply rooted, that precocity of intellectual development is unfavorable to longevity. Dr. Beard, in the paper to which we have referred, has completely exploded this doctrine. He shows conclusively that, as a rule, a brain of exceptional force is united to a constitution of exceptionally good fibre, and that precocity, so far from being premonitory of early death, is almost always a mark of great talents, and usually, therefore, of the constitutional strength of brain which accompanies great talents. Of two hundeed and thirteen musical prodigies, whose ages had been investigated by one Winterburn, whom he cites, it was found that the average age at death was fifty-eight, while some lived to one hundred and three. Of the five hundred of the most eminent men in history, whose ages Dr. Beard examined, as we have previously stated, and whose average age he found to be sixty-four years and two to three months, one hundred and fifty were decidedly precocious; yet of these precocious men of genius the average age at death was sixty-six and six months; that is,—and the statement will startle most readers,—*more than two years higher than the average of the whole five hundred* and *three years higher than that of the three hun-*

dred and fifty who were not precocious. Three of the most precocious geniuses of our day were Bishop Thirlwall, Macaulay, and De Quincey, yet they lived to the ages respectively of seventy-eight, fifty-rine and seventy-four.

Of all the qualities of mind that conduce to longevity, none are more vitally essential that calmness and serenity of temper, and their concomitants, cheerfulness and hope. It was long ago said that the habit of looking on the bright side of things is worth more than a thousand pounds a year. "To be free-minded, and cheerfully disposed, at hours of meat, and of sleep, and of exercises," says Bacon, "is one of the best precepts of long lasting." Worry, it is well known, kills more men than the toughest work. Worry, indeed, is the converse of legitimate work; the one, as Dr. Baird says, develops force, the other checks its development, and wastes what already exists. It is a truth which few realize, that every fit of despondency or ennui, every emotion of envy, jealousy, or hate, every burst of passion, takes just so much out of our fund of vital force, and tends, therefore, to abbreviate the term of living. Unfortunately many persons, such as the speculator, the railway manager, the great merchant, follow callings the cares and vicissitudesof which almost necessitate both worry and overwork. Persons who vault suddenly into positions for which their training has not fitted them,—especially if these position involves the bearing on the mind of a multiplicity of intricate and perplexing details,—are peculiarly liable to suffer from cerebral overstrain, and consequent exhaustion, and mental anxiety and gloom. Again, worry, in literary and artistic callings, where the utmost elaboration and the nicest finish are required to success, is an almost necessary incident of work. If a man has a higher ideal of the kind of work he ought to do, or of the quantity of work he ought to do, than he can possibly hope to realize, how can he help worrying about the result when he foresees that it must inevitably fall far short of his wishes?

While the vices tend generally to shorten life, there is one exception, namely, avarice. Nine persons out of every ten probably eat double, if not treble the food that is essential to robust health, and the excess engenders diseases which induce a premature old age, and fill many of its days with torment. It is said that the Arabs of the desert are vigorous and long-lived, though they eat but four ounces of gum, or a pint of camel's milk, in a day; and the Indian can travel from fifty to eighty miles in that time with only a few ounces of parched corn for his nourishment. The miser whom the epicure despises for his abstemiousness, is really putting himself in precisely the conditions which are favorable to a long and healthy life. Keeping regular hours, and using the sunlight instead of gas or oil, he rests and works in periods that accord with the periodicity of nature; economizing in his expenditures, and saving from his income, he avoids the self-contempt and worry incident to penury; and dreading all risks he steers clear of speculation, gambling, and all the temptations to amass riches by a hazardous means, with the nervous excitement and violent alternations of feeling that attend the gambler's gains and losses. He is thus not only less exposed to disease than other men, but when he becomes its victim suffers far less from its ravages, and more quickly rallies and assumes his wonted vigor.

It is said that Lord Palmerston, being asked one day by a friend when he considered a man to be in the prime of life, replied: "Seventy-nine. But," he added with a playful smile, "as I have just entered on my eightieth year, perhaps I am myself a little past it." The hereditary legislators of England, thanks to their freedom from "carking cares," and the vigilance with which in the evening of life they have treasured their ever-diminishing vital force, have generally lived to a great age. Of a score of British peers who died in 1856, the united ages of sixteen amounted to 1229, an average of almost seventy-seven years to each. Of thirty-two peers who died in

1868, two died between fifty and sixty years old, eigh[t] between sixty and seventy, thirteen between seventy an[d] eighty, and seven above eighty. Two of the latt[er] reached eighty-nine. The average of their combined age was seventy-one and three-eighths years.

Of all the orders of society no other one is so distin[-] guished for its quiet and comfort, and for its exemptio[n] from all that exhausts the vital powers as that of th[e] Quakers. A general prosperity, equally removed fron greatness on the one hand, and poverty and embarrass[-] ment on the other, shines over the meek heads of thi[s] amiable and gentle sect, who have often been the first to exemplify in their lives many Christian precepts treated as only theoretical by their fellows. And what is the re- sult? Statistics show that the chance of life enjoyed by this tranquil race is nearly twice as good as that of other men, thus proving that it is the pace that kills, and that temperate labors and pleasures, with the easy tempera- ment that throws off care like rain-drops from a duck's back, are, next to a genius for longevity, the surest pass- port to a good old age.

The royal moralist, in summing up the advantages of heavenly wisdom, tells us that *length of days is in her right hand*, and there is no doubt that a long life, if it be virtu- ously and happily spent, is a blessing most earnestly to be coveted. The mere lapse of years, however, is not life; "knowledge, truth, love, beauty, goodness, faith, alone give vitality to the mechanism of existence." The value of time is purely relative; and if we count it by heart- beats, not by the tickings of the clock, or the shadow on the dial,—if "he lives longest," as Bailey says, "who knows most, thinks the wisest, acts the best,"—then many who were rich in years have really died young, while others whose lives, measured by the calendar, were cut short early, have been opulent in life. Shakspeare, who died at fifty-two, lived ten times as long as poor old Parr, who could boast of his one hundred and forty years;

Pascal, who crowded into his thirty-nine years the thought of an antediluvian life, was far older than Antoine Sauvé at a hundred and thirty. Mere old age, following an oyster-like existence, during which one has droned away his life in his shell, never buffeting the waves for himself or others, is a questionable blessing; but the serene old age which is secured by temperance, sobriety, and the conquest of vicious appetites and passions,—the long, mellow autumn of life, in which are harvested the fruits of years of useful toil,—is to be coveted and striven for by all. In the words of an old poet:

> "It is not growing like a tree
> In bulk doth make man better be,
> Or standing long, an oak three hundred year,
> To fall a log at last, dry, bald and sere;
> A lily of a day
> Is fairer far in May.
> Although it fall and die that night,
> It was the plant and flower of light.
> In small proportions we just beauties see,
> And in short measures life may perfect be."

The Season of Travel.

ABOUT the fourth of July the hot weather comes suddenly upon us, sending the mercury at one leap to 90, and thoughts of the sea-shore, the country, and foreign lands, begin to engross men's minds. Through the open window come the roar of the street and the scream of the locomotive, suggesting, the one the boom of the ocean, the other the cool breezes, shady nooks, and quiet of the inland village. The counting-room, the shop, and the office, have suddenly a prison-like look; our work becomes irksome; the air seems stifling; an unaccountable restlessness seizes us, and, half unconsciously, we find ourselves rushing, carpet-bag in hand, to the railway station, as if not only health, but life itself, depended on our transporting ourselves without delay to the mountain-top, the rushing stream, or the open sea—perhaps to some foreign land.

There is something almost ludicrous in the suddenness with which, at this season, from a nation of intense workers, thinking only of money-making, we are metamorphosed into a nation of travelers; and it may be true that, as many a *paterfamilias* grumbles, locomotion has become a mania of Americans. "Traveling," says Emerson, "is a fool's paradise," and no doubt we may expect too much from it. It is true, as the Roman satirist declares, that corroding care scales the brazen-beaked galleys, and that no exile from his country is an exile from himself; or, as the Concord philosopher echoes, that we may pack our trunks, embrace our friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples; yet there beside us is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical,

that we fled from. Our giant goes with us wherever we go. Though we take to ourselves the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, we cannot change our temperament or constitution ; we are still the same grumbling Jones or foolish Brown ; we cannot, by running across the sea, run away from our proper selves. Yet, if we cannot "reconstruct" our natures, we may at least gain intellectual expansion by travel ; and therefore the man of intellect and the man of learning, equally with the coxcomb and the man of fashion, will always delight in this stirring idleness, this indolent activity. The most phlegmatic minds are stimulated by the succession of novelties it affords ; and the senses never hold so justifiable a sway over the intellect as when they are indulged with the stimulus of perpetual change, and banquet upon a kaleidoscopic variety of sights and scenes under the plea of intellectual advantage.

Aside from this, it is unquestionably a good thing in itself to be "knocked about in the world"—not forcibly propelled by the application of others' heels, but tossed about, jolted from town to town, from continent to continent—now on railroads, now on steamboats, and anon in buggy, stage-coach, diligence, or on the "raging canal"—any way but on a fence-rail—and learning to bear one's lot ungrumblingly, whatever bed or board, edibles or potables, may be set before him. Those who talk of travel as a mere "fashion," forget that there is in human nature an intense craving for change. The more intense the life we live, the stronger and more imperious does that craving become. Even the physical organs become weary at last of the same things; the lungs always breathing the same air, the stomach always taking the same food, the ears always hearing the same sounds, even the eyes always resting on the same round of familiar objects, become disgusted, lose their tone, and cry out for change. But the mind, even more than the body, tires of the mill-horse round. The brain like the stomach, is disgusted, if it

has always the same work to do, or the same material to work upon. The nerves, like the muscles, grow weary of sameness, and must have the stress of labor shifted, and the continuity of labor broken.

Arctic explorers tell of the dreadful persecution of perpetual daylight in the six months' polar day, and of the terrible depression produced by perpetual darkness in the six months' night. But scarcely less depressing is the effect of perpetual work amid the same scenes, with no play or rest. Life is a balance of opposites, health is their equipoise, and the overbalance of either is disease. Hence the necessity of recreation to redress the injured balance of our nature, and hence the absurdity of saying that it is fashion merely which drives men away in the hot months from their homes; for the fashion is dictated by a deep-lying instinct, and originates in physical and intellectual need. Camping out on the Adirondacks—trouting in the Lake Superior region, or at Moosehead Lake—climbing the dizzy heights of the White Mountains—yachting and bathing at Newport—journeying on foot from village to village—making flying visits to the Old World—all these modes of recreation are compensatory and health-restoring, and are worth many times the greenbacks they cost to enjoy them. Travel lifts both the bodily machine and the mental out of the rut in which they have been cabined, cribbed, and confined; it breaks up the monotony and stagnation of life; it vivifies the faculties which have been long suppressed, and out of the scholar, the merchant, or the artisan, reproduces and re-creates the man. It emancipates the student from the books over which he has pored too long; the dealer in merchandise or stocks from the bondage of the day-book and ledger; the clergyman from his musty theology, and the lawyer from the bickerings of Doe and Roe; and it liberates woman from those petty and monotonous domestic cares which tyrannize over her daily life, and check all efforts at self-culture. Especially to those who

have reached what has been called the stagnation period of life—who are afflicted with the *maladie de quarante ans*—is this specific to be recommended. When world-weariness, sadness of heart and countenance, doubts if the play be worth the candle, and all the feelings that go to make up that *tedium vitæ* which tempts so many to shuffle off this mortal coil, seize upon us, and all the uses of the world seem stale, flat and unprofitable, then is the time to jump, carpet-bag in hand, on board the railway car or steamer, to cut all the ties that bind us to our country, calling and home, and, in a perfect vacation from accustomed duties, faces and aims, to give one's self up to the novelties, incidents and refreshings of travel. It carries the soul, as another has said, *over the dead-point in its revolution;* it gives the heart time to adjust itself to a new order of circumstances, to take a fresh start, with new and higher motives, and to recover a youth and a goal which no future circumstances can take away or render uninviting.

But it is chiefly as a prescription for bigotry and prejudice that travel, and especially foreign travel, is to be commended. No doubt there are many persons who add little to their stock of information by visiting other lands—men whose conversation is no more enriched by what they see abroad than was Lord Charlemont's, of whom Johnson grumbled that he never but once had heard him talk of what he had seen, and *that* was of a large serpent in one of the Pyramids of Egypt. If a man has no classical or historical knowledge, it is altogether probable that his patriotism will not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, and that his piety will not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona; and that if he lacks an artistic education or a cultivated taste, he will derive no more benefit from a visit to the Pitti Palace, the Vatican, or the Louvre, than the great majority of the well-dressed mob who lounge there, and who inwardly regard the pictures as a

bore. But though it is too true, as Tom Hood laments i his Ode to Rae Wilson, that

> "Alas!
> Some minds improve by travel,—others rather
> Resemble copper wire or brass,
> Which gets the narrower by going farther,"

yet this proves only that the eye sees what it brings th means of seeing, and that, as the proverb says, he tha would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carr out the wealth of the Indies. The general truth remains that travel brushes away the contractedness, shakes of the one-sidedness, knocks out the nonsense, and polishe the manners of a man, more effectually than any othe agency.

The great defect of your chimney-corner people is, tha they have no breadth or expansiveness of ideas, no know ledge of, or sympathy with the millions of their race ou of their own immediate circle. Hugging perpetually thei own firesides, they come at last to confound what is acci dental with what is essential; to fancy that their own no tions, tastes, and feelings, are inseparable from the natur of man. Rabelais has felicitously hit off this whole class of persons by describing them as persons who seem as i they had lived all their lives in a barrel, and only looked out at the bung-hole. Going abroad and ventilating thei ideas among strangers, they find that dogmas which they have always looked upon as unquestionable, because they have never heard them questioned, are rejected by great and enlightened communities; that feelings which they had thought instinctive to the race are unknown to whole nations; that notions and opinions which have excited their contempt or horror are regarded as ennobling and sublime by millions. They thus lose the Chinese cast of mind, that stupid contempt for everything beyond the wall of their celestial empire, which once made them ridiculous. They doubt where they once dogmatized; they tolerate

where they once execrated. New associations take place among their ideas; they overhaul the old rubbish of their opinions; bigotry and prejudice are exploded; and the whole man, perhaps, undergoes a revolution of sentiments and sympathies as complete as the mutation of form in certain insects.

For these reasons we rejoice in the increasing passion for travel, and cry "Io Triumphe!" to every locomotive that trails its murky banner along the air. Foreigners may smile at what they term our national mania for locomotion—the Bedouin habits of our people; but we regard this circulation, this vagabondizing instinct, this ebb and flow of the masses of our population—north, south, east, and west—as the very life-tide of our system. Let the sharp-witted, speculative Yankee, and the impetuous native of the South, the frank, open-hearted son of the West, and the calm-minded, dignified inhabitant of the Middle States, jostle freely together, giving and taking the peculiar tastes, feelings and opinions of their respective communities, and we shall have no fears of disunion or sectional broils. It is ignorance and isolation only which create a want of sympathy; and no American, therefore, should consider his education as complete until he has *studied geography practically,* not merely by scaling the dizzy heights of Mont Blanc, or exploring the vales of Cashmere, but by travelling over the length and breadth of that mighty country stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, which he boasts as "his own, his native land."

Hot-House Education.

THE tendency to over-stimulate the mental faculties of the young in this country has been often rebuked by the press, but was never, we think, more alarm ing than now. When Mr. Parton visited Chicago some time since, to write his article on that city for the "Atlantic Monthly," he was struck with the general excellence of our public schools, but was painfully impressed with the conviction that they were intellectual hot-houses, where the minds of the young were rapidly developed, but developed at the expense of physical vigor, and at the risk of ultimate weakness, and even insanity. But Chicago is not the only city where the young are educated by steam. The idea that the intellectual growth of children should be forced like lettuces in hot-houses, is prevalent all over the country. East and West, North and South, there is a rage for cleverness; and though, like the pearl in the oyster, it be the result of disease, it is yet encouraged and applauded even when it involves the ruin of both the physical and moral health. The "smart" boy is incited to display his abilities before admiring visitors, and the "smart" girl is perched upon a music-stool at ten or twelve years of age to play a sonata of Beethoven. In a New York paper we read of a little girl whose parents boast that she is so absorbed in her school lessons that she says them over nightly in her sleep. The town of Essex, Massachusetts, boasts of another infant phenomenon, which, though only three years old, plays over three hundred pieces on the piano. At a Sunday school celebration on Long Island, where prizes were given to those children who recited from memory the greatest number

of verses from the Bible, a little pale-faced prodigy,—a girl of only four years old,—distanced all her rivals by repeating *one hundred and eleven verses* of Mark's Gospel! Englishmen, it is said, are surprised at the precocity of American children, and the variety of their attainments at an early age; but even John Bull is beginning to copy our absurdities, and to be dissatisfied unless the young travel in "lightning express" trains along the railways of knowledge. An English editor met a little girl going to school the other day, who had work enough cut out for a full-grown Euclid. Besides lessons in orthography, etymology, and syntax, she had others to learn in astronomy, belles-lettres, music, drawing, and political economy, with side issues, consisting of cardboard, needle-work, and Berlin wool, pictures of lemon-colored sheep kept from indigo lions by a saffron-colored shepherd,—and the whole to be done up and finished in three hours!

A writer in Macmillan's Magazine, a few years ago, spoke of four cases that had come to his knowledge of girls seriously injured by excessive educational cramming. In one, the brain was utterly unable to bear the burden put upon it, and the pupil was removed from school in a highly excitable state; in another, epileptic fits had followed the host of subjects pressed upon the scholar; in the third, the symptoms of brain fog had become so obvious that the amount of schooling had been greatly reduced; and in a fourth fits had been induced, followed by complete prostration of brain. The same writer quotes from a work by Brudnell Carter on "The Influence of Education and Training in Preventing Diseases of the Nervous System," a statement that there is a large public school in London where boys from ten to twelve years old carry home tasks which will occupy them till near midnight, and where the rules and laws of study are so arranged as to preclude the possibility of sufficient recreation. Some years ago the British public was startled by the suicides of young men who had been preparing for examination at the Univer-

sity of London. As if the cubic capacity of the British skull were annually increasing, new studies are continually added to the academic curriculum, which exacts an amount of labor suited only to a matured brain. Facts like these are alarming, and show that in education as in everything else, the "haste that makes waste" is the great curse of modern life. Instead of following the course which nature dictates, and leaving the child to feel its own powers, and to revel in infantile wonder at the objects which solicit its gaze, we begin at once to worry it with school-books, and labor with might and main to make it "a useful member of society." Before the age of four we begin the work of oppressing its little brain with an incubus of technical terms and pedantic phrases, and compel it to acquire, by painful and irksome attention, things which would tax severely the intellect of an adult. At seven or eight it is deep in the mysteries of arithmetic, grammar, "geography and the use of the globes;" at nine or ten we cram it with Greek and Latin; at twelve to fourteen it vaults into College and coat-tails; and at seventeen or eighteen has been dragged through a four-years' course, having acquired a smattering of everything, with a thorough knowledge of nothing, and having finished its education almost before it should have fairly begun.

Can any man doubt the fatal effects of such a process? Is it not almost sure to stunt the intellect, to exhaust prematurely the intellectual energies, and thus doom the future man to be an intellectual dwarf? We hear a great hue and cry about "the educational advantages enjoyed by children in our day." But in what do these boasted privileges consist? Is it in the fact that we force open with hasty hand the young and tender buds of mind; that we encourage precocity of brain at the cost of lasting vigor; that we exhaust the mental soil by crops too heavy for it? Should we consider him wise who would endeavor to plant an oak in a flower-pot? and is it quite sagacious to cloud

the open brow of childhood with mannish thoughts, and to shadow with worldly wisdom faces which "should not have borne this aspect yet for many a year ?" Let the intellectual stature of succeeding generations answer. Let the early lives of all men who have astonished the world by the greatness of their intellectual endowments answer. Let the scores and hundreds of men answer who crawl along through life *prematurely old*,—men all brain, with no bodies,—mere ghosts or phantoms of humanity, who have *never enjoyed a feeling of youth*, and whose over-stimulated education has been the grave of their healths, pleasures, and affections. Oh! that doting fathers and mothers, who study only to make their children prodigies of precocity, would take a lesson from Nature!—she who hides the germs and first stirrings of all life in darkness; who is always forced, yet content, to begin with the minutest particles, and who never attempts to produce anything great except by slow and tedious processes of growth and assimilation. How tardily and snail-like she crawls about her task of creating anything that is to be lasting or valuable. SHE never is in a hurry, or does anything *per saltum*—in a day, and at a jerk, as it were. She has no steam-engine processes, or science-made-easy modes of operation. She cannot get to the end of her journey, as we can, in a trice, by a short cut or royal road—with a hop, skip and jump only. She runs up no oaks in a year or two, nor requires less than ages to consummate the virtues of her diamonds. It takes her twenty years to grow a common man, a thousand to grow a nation, and a thousand more to grow a philosopher.

Of all the human organs the brain is in childhood the most delicate. The nervous system, the source of all vital energy, predominates in youth, and, if it be subjected to too severe a strain, it is at the expense of the other parts of the body at the very time when the greatest amount of vital power is required, and when nature is striving to perfect the physical system. If the strain be long con-

tinued, the result is not necessarily, as in the case of the adult, fatigue, which may be readily relieved by rest, but the organ itself yields, and its efficiency is impaired. There will be, as in the adult, increased circulation and activity of the nutritive functions of the brain; but "there is this difference; that the brain tissue here is soft and yielding, and, instead of offering the normal resistance to the abnormal flux of blood, it yields to the pressure, the vessels become enlarged, perhaps permanently, and congestion is the result,—productive not only of serious consequences for the time being, but, by the very fact of its occurrence, inducing an ever increasing liability to its occurrence. Then, perhaps, the overcharged vessels make an attempt to relieve themselves by pouring out some of their fluid contents, and effusion into the ventricles, or on the surface of the brain, is the consequence."* "Mentally speaking," says Dr. George Moore, "those who bear the palm in severe universities are often destroyed by the effort necessary to obtain the distinction. Like phosphorescent insects, their brilliance lasts but a little while, and is at its height when on the point of being extinguished forever. The laurel crown is commonly for the dead, if not corporeally, at least spiritually; and those who attain the highest honors of their Alma Mater are generally diseased men."

The sooner American fathers and mothers cease to pride themselves on the ambition and intelligence only of their children, and begin to exult in the development of their limbs, muscles, and solid flesh, the better will it be for the nation. All experience shows that it is not those that are hurried the fastest over the first steps in knowledge that make the greatest headway in after-life. Many a person, by having his mental energy prematurely exhausted in childhood, has been doomed to be an intellectual dwarf all the rest of his days. Teachers who

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* "A Physician's Problems." By Charles Elam, M.D., M.R.C.P.

overtax their pupils commit the old mistake of fancying that suffering which does not follow on the heels of transgression will never come. The worst effects of excessive mental labor do not always appear in the form of an overt mental ailment, but in a morbid irritability which deprives the brain of its natural elasticity, and of its power to endure severe and protracted exertion. It is true that children who are kept from school, and whose brains are suffered to lie fallow for a few years, do not gratify the vanity of their parents by their precocity, but they are meanwhile accumulating such an amount of physical and mental strength as will enable them to advance with redoubled impetus hereafter. Robust health, rosy cheeks, well-developed limbs, and lungs that "crow like chanticleer," and make the air ring with laughter and shouts, and now and then screams, are far surer indications of a future stalwart intellect than all the mental feats that ever delighted a father's heart. It is a well-established fact that men of true genius have often manifested little superiority of talent in childhood. Great intellectual power is frequently tardy in its development, and often there is a seeming sluggishness or obtuseness, during their early years, in those gifted persons that subsequently tower a head and shoulders above their fellows. "Give me the plodding student," Sir Henry Saville, head master of Eton in the time of Elizabeth and James, used to say; "if I would look for wits, I would go to Newgate: there be wits." Rousseau somewhere remarks that nothing is more difficult than to discriminate between real dullness in children and that apparent and fallacious stupidity which is the forerunner of great abilities. The younger Cato, in his infancy, passed for an idiot; Goldsmith was dull in youth; the school-master of the brilliant Richard Brinsley Sheridan pronounced the boy "an incorrigible dunce;" Chatterton was so slow at learning in childhood that he was sent home to his mother as "a fool, of whom nothing could be made." His mother was equally

unsuccessful in teaching him; yet he afterward learned fast enough when he began the task of self-culture. Sir Humphry Davy declared that he had made himself what he was, and rejoiced in after-life that he was allowed to be so idle at school. Robert Burns was "a dour, sulky callan" at school, and when the master undertook to teach the pupils a little sacred music, Burns' ear was so dull, and his voice so untunable, that he could not frame a note, and he was distanced by all the other boys. Dr. Scott, the famous commentator, when twelve years old could hardly compose a correct English sentence. Dr. Adam Clarke, another celebrated Biblical commentator, was considered a grievous dunce in youth, and was seldom praised by his father, except for his ability to roll large stones—"an ability," says a medical writer, "which I conceive a parent should be prouder to have his son possess, previous to the age of seven or eight, than the ability to recite all that is contained in all the manuals, magazines, and books for infants that have ever been published." A farmer in Wisconsin, who had been a school-boy with Charles Dickens, was asked one day "if he was bright." "Not at all," was the reply; "we thought the one who died down there in Chicago was by far the brightest." Sir Walter Scott had the credit of having "the thickest skull in the school" when he attended the High School in Edinburgh, and disgusted his kind master by his negligence and frivolity. If there was any "bicker," however, or fight with the boys of other schools, "Wattie Scott" was sure to be a ringleader, and in the very thick of the fray. Even at the University he did no better, and went by the nickname of "The Great Blockhead." His bodily powers, however, had been fully developed and matured, and he had devoured a great amount of miscellaneous reading-matter. Even Newton ranked low as a scholar in his boyhood; and the father of Isaac Barrow, Newton's successor at Cambridge, deemed his son such a marvel of stupidity, that he used to say that if it pleased God to take from

him any of his children, he hoped it might be Isaac, as he was the least promising. At school little Isaac was noted chiefly for his love for fighting, in which he got many a bloody nose. Neither Dryden nor Swift showed talent in his early writings. "Indifferent in behavior, and of doubtful hope," was scored against the name of Berzelius, the eminent Swedish chemist, when he left school for the university. Liebig was distinguished only as a "booby" at school; and when, in reply to the sneering inquiry what he proposed to become since he was so dull a scholar, he said he would be a chemist, the whole school burst into a laugh of derision. The only boy in the school who disputed with Liebig the title of "booby" was one who could never get his lesson by heart, but was continually composing music by stealth, and whom Liebig found afterward at Vienna to be distinguished as a composer, and conductor of the Imperial Opera House. Douglas Jerrold was dull in childhood, and could hardly read at nine. Generals Grant and Sheridan graduated at West Point low down in their classes, and General Washington exhibited but little intellectual power in his youth.

The following anecdote is told of a pupil of General Salem Towne, of Charlton, Mass., who was a teacher in the early part of his life, and who died a few years ago at the age of ninety-two. One day a boy was brought to him, of whom the account given was that he *was so incorrigible a dunce*, that none of his masters had been able to make anything of him; and he was brought to Mr. Towne as a last experiment, before apprenticing him to a mechanical trade. The next morning Mr. Towne proceeded to examine him, preparatory to entering upon his instruction. At the first mistake he made the boy dodged on one side, with every sign of terror. "Why do you do that?" asked the master. "Because I was afraid you were going to strike me." "Why should you think so?" "Because I have always been struck whenever I made a mistake." "You need never fear being struck by me,"

said Mr. Towne. "That is not my way of treating boys who do as well as they can." The lad very soon improved rapidly under this new treatment, so that Mr. Towne advised his father to give him a liberal education. The father consented, and William L. Marcy became a lawyer, judge, governor, United States senator, and secretary of war and of state.

We might name many other powerful minds that were protected in childhood from injury by their educators by an almost preternatural armor of stolidity; but these will suffice. Let parents, then, not be in a hurry to develop their children's abilities, as the consequences may be fatal. "If a parent," says that acute medical writer, Dr. Edward Johnson, "were seen urging and tempting and stimulating his child to the performance of an amount of labor with legs and arms, sufficient to tax the health and strength of a full-grown man, all the world would say, '*Shame upon him!* he will cripple his child with excessive work.' Yet everybody seems to think that, though the limbs of children cannot, without injury, be urged and tasked to do the work of men's limbs, yet that their *brains* may be tasked to any degree with impunity. What is there in the brain and its powers essentially differing from the leg? Nothing whatever. But people seem to look upon the brain as a mystical, magical something or other, which is exempt from the ordinary laws which govern all the other organs of the body. The principal business of a child's limbs is to grow and acquire strength. Thought, reflection and study constitute the natural work of man's brain, as plowing and sawing are the work of a man's limbs."

Originality.

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, speaking in one of his vigorous essays of the baleful effects of literary envy and jealousy, says that "one of the most common is the charge of plagiarism. When the excellence of a new composition can no longer be contested, and malice is compelled to give way to the unanimity of applause, there is yet this one expedient to be tried, by which the *author* may be degraded, though his *work* be reverenced; and the excellence which we cannot obscure may be set at such a distance as not to overpower our fainter lustre. *This accusation is dangerous, because even while it is false, it may sometimes be urged with probability.*" Charges of this kind have been made so often and so recklessly of late—so much cheap ridicule has been expended upon literary "assimilation" by witlings, who know of no way of using other men's ideas except by filching them bodily—that it may be worth while to inquire into the philosophy of literary creation. Is there such a thing as originality—pure and absolute—in letters? Is it, or is it not, still true that, as the wise man proclaimed twenty-eight hundred years ago, there is nothing new under the sun? Are all the supposed novelties of thought that delight or startle us in the works of the day, only rehabilitations of old ideas, or was Chaucer in error when he sang:—

> "For out of oldë feldës, as men saith,
> Cometh al this newë corn from yeer to yere,
> And out of oldë bokës, in good faith,
> Cometh al this newë science that men lere?"

The answer to this question depends upon the precise meaning we attach to the word originality. If by originality we mean an absolute initiation of what is essentially new in science, art, action, method, or application, it is pretty certain that there has been nothing of the kind since the first germs of thought began to bud and blossom in the prehistoric ages. The germs quickened apace, and multiplied so fast—the intellectual debts from man to man accumulated so rapidly—that originality became lost in antiquity. If we examine modern works of fancy, we shall find that the writers have, strictly speaking, created nothing new; they have only recombined old materials, or given new wings to an old body. As our very speech has sprung from roots in scores of dialects, and as our modern machines have their roots in the graves of forgotten inventors, so our literature has blossomed out of a boundless antiquity. Its luxuriant foliage and huge forest growth, which now so gratefully overshadow us, are "rooted in strata of decaying or decayed mind, and derive their nourishment from them; the very soil we turn is the loose *detritus* of thought, washed down to us through long ages." In short, we are all our fathers' sons. The wisdom of our ancestors, for two hundred generations back, runs in our blood. The thought, study, and research of a million of our predecessors are condensed into our mental constitution. All the ages have shared in making us what we are. The wisdom of Moses and Solomon, the glowing fervor of David, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, the sublime pathos of Jeremiah, the speculations of Plato and Aristotle, the winged words of Homer, the *vivida vis* of Æschylus and Dante, the sterling sense of Horace, the oceanic genius of Shakspeare, the profound thought of Bacon, Descartes, Kant, Pascal, Newton, Leibnitz, and Kepler, are all represented in the fibre of our brain and in our ideas. Few educated men to-day have read the "Inferno;" fewer still the "Novum Organum," or the "Principia;" yet who can say how much poorer

they would have been intellectually, had Dante, Bacon, and Newton, never lived, or had they with miser-like selfishness kept their thoughts to themselves!

The originality which some critics demand is simply an impossibility. To attain it, a writer must make a *tabula rasa* of his brain; he must place himself in the condition of the first man, and ignore all the ideas which he owes to his contemporaries and the generations before him. Like the Greek hero, he must shut his eyes, close his nostrils, and seal his ears with wax, lest he catch the infection of other men's thought; or, better still, he should be shut up from childhood, like Miranda, on a desert island, with no companion but Caliban. Unfortunately, or rather fortunately, he lives in the great ocean of human thought, and cannot if he would, be unaffected by its contact. He can no more shut himself off from the universal life than the most secluded loch or bay can cease, in the flooding and ebbing of its tiny waters, to respond to the great tidal movements of the ocean. The most conscientious writer, however hard he may strive to be original, is compelled to be, in a greater or less degree, a literary resurrectionist. His brain is full of old material that has lost its labels. The echoes of other men's wit and wisdom linger in his brain long after he has forgotten their origin. Again, all the topics of literature have been exhausted, and when he is most confident of having hit upon a new idea, he finds, sooner or later, that he was anticipated ages before, and has only changed the form of its expression. Johnson was so convinced of this that he thought of composing a work "to show how small a quantity of real fiction there is in the world, and that the same images, with very little variation, have served all the authors who have ever written." Piron was so angry because his predecessors had forestalled him, and robbed him in advance of all his ideas, that he declared he would do as they did, and forestall his descendants:

"Malheur aux écrivains qui viendront après moi!"

Addison and Goldsmith, each in his turn, felt that he had come at the eleventh hour. The sickles of others had already reaped the full crop of wisdom. "It is a misfortune," said the latter, "for fine writers to be born in a period so enlightened as ours. The harvest of wit is gathered in, and little left to glean." "In our own times," says Jeffrey, "all the higher walks of literature have been so long and so often trodden that it is scarcely possible to keep out of the footsteps of some of our precursors. The ancients, it is well known, have stolen most of our bright thoughts, and not only visibly beset all the patent approaches to glory, but swarm in such ambushed multitudes behind, that when we think we have gone fairly beyond their plagiarisms, and honestly worked out an original excellence of our own, up starts some deep-read antiquary and makes it out, much to his own satisfaction, that heaven knows how many of these busybodies have been beforehand with us in the *genus* and the *species* of our invention." In a similar vein the Chevalier de Cailly, two hundred years ago, being charged with stealing from the ancients, laughed at their pretensions:

> "Dis-je quelque chose assez belle!
> L'antiquité tout en cervelle
> Prétend l'avoir dite avant moi!
> C'est une plaisante donzelle!
> Que ne venait elle après moi,
> J'aurais dit la chose avant elle!"

If, therefore, we wish to know whether there is any originality in the literature of our day, we shall not ask whether its materials are absolutely new, but whether they have been so adapted and moulded as to be a new creation. Can the bee make honey without rifling the roses of their sweets? Is the produce of the apple-tree less original because it absorbs the juices of the soil and

the balm of the air before it draws from its own sap the life that swells out the trunk and gives color and flavor to the fruit? Is the rainbow less beautiful because it borrows its colors from the sun? Is an architect's design less original because he has not baked every brick in his edifice? Or is a Greek or Gothic temple a plagiarism because the acanthus leaf may have suggested the capital to a column, or a vista through forest branches the idea of an arch or an aisle? The essence of originality,—of the only originality possible in our day,—is not the invention of something *bizarre* and extraordinary, but the vitalizing of materials that already exist, and which are common to all. It is not easy to define what is called genius; but one thing is certain, namely, that it does not feed on itself and spin cobwebs out of its own bowels, which would only keep it forever impoverished and thin, but is essentially passive and receptive in its nature, and impregnates itself continually with the thoughts and feelings of others. The materials upon which it is to act must be gathered from without, not from within; and hence the ancients, who knew that the human mind can create nothing,—that the best part of genius is constituted of recollections,—called Memory the mother of the Muses. It was, apparently, because they recognized the truth that the poet must despoil all the fields of literature for his materials, that the old Greek mythologists, whose most fanciful fables often concealed the profoundest wisdom, prefigured the idea of plagiarism by making Mercury the god of the lyre and the god of thieves. So, in later times, Lord Bacon held memory to be the grand source of meditation and thought. Buffon declared that the human mind could create nothing, but merely reproduce from experience and reflection; that knowledge only, or what the memory retained, was the germ of all mental products. Chateaubriand averred that the greatest writers have put only their own histories into their works, and that

the productions of genius are composed only of recollections.

The greatest genius that ever blazes on the world would soon cease to illumine it, if the fire were not ceaselessly fed from the funded thought of others. Virgil and Dante, Milton and Shakspeare, were not pure inventors, but debtors, to an incalculable extent, to the thoughts and imaginings of the army of lesser poets who preceded them. Before they struck their lyres an infinite amount of labor had been done which they had assimilated and converted into their own capital. "All that they had read, as well as all they had ever seen, went into the mill; and what genius did was to turn the wheel and make the grain into flour." Had the author of "Hamlet" dwelt always in a desert island he could not have written the least of his sonnets. Even Homer himself, the fountain of imagery to so many poets, was probably no exception to this law. An intelligent writer thinks it harder to believe that he had no reservoir of learning, no mysterious lake of knowledge (as Sir William Temple expresses it), into which he could throw a bucket. Some one has defined originality as only *recasting;* and we may be sure that when a modern statue is made there is a great melting down of old bronze. Goethe somewhere says that all that is wise has been thought already, but we must try, nevertheless, to think it again. The same writer suggests that the fairest sign of originality is to know how to develop an old thought so fruitfully that no one could have guessed before how much truth there was in it. In other words, we are original when we take thoughts in the bud, and make them fruitful. Thus no mighty intellect is wholly lost, but, in the lapse of years,

> "doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange."

Every work of genius, by coming into mesmeric *rapport*

with the affinities of kindred genius, and firing its latent energies, becomes the parent of many others ; and old materials continually decomposed and continually recombined, furnish a perpetual succession of imaginative literature.

It is thus that all the great discoveries in science and the most useful inventions have been made. The mechanical force of steam was known to Heron two thousand years before Watt watched the jumping lid of the tea-kettle ; and, after lying dead for nearly eighteen centuries, the fruitful seed-thought of the old Greek sprang up in the invention of Blasco de Garay, who in 1543 propelled a ship of two hundred tons in the harbor of Barcelona, by means of paddles moved by a boiler, and again, at a later day, in the steamboat of Papin, which descended the river Fulda as far as Munden. The brick-stamps of the Egyptians suggested our movable types; the mnemonics of Simonides were the precursors of Grey's "Memoria Technica ;" and Galileo's telescope sprang from the hint of an obscure Greek of the Lower Empire. The electric telegraph was foreshadowed in Bailie's dictionary a century and a half ago, if not before in the "Mathematical Recreations" published in Paris in 1626. Newton developed the imperfect hints of Hook into the doctrine of gravitation; Dalton converted the vague and shadowy suggestions of Higgins into the chemical theory of Definite Proportions; and Malthus took an obvious and familiar truth, which till his time had been barren of results, and showed that it teemed with startling consequences. So in philosophy: hardly any of the great intellects that have dedicated their genius to it can lay claim to originality of thought. The "Edinburgh Review" justly says that the great truths of metaphysics are like family jewels, which descend as heir-looms from generation to generation, and are perpetually reset to suit the fashion of the times. "Thought," says Emerson, "is the property of him who can entertain it of him who can adequately place it."

Again he says: "The nobler the truth or sentiment, th less important the question of authorship. It neve troubles the simple seeker from whom he derived such o such a sentiment. Whoever expresses to us a just though makes ridiculous the pains of the critic who should tel him where such a word has been said before. 'It is nc more according to Plato than according to me.'" So Kar Ottfried Miller says of Poesy, that, "within its circle al that is glorious and inspiring it gave itself but little concern as to where its flowers originally grew;" and again Shelley in the same spirit declares that poetry creates, but it creates by combination and representation. "One great poet is a master-piece of nature, which another not only ought to study; but must study. * * * A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others, and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and in any other the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape." In the same spirit an English writer used to say: "I don't like my jokes until Sheridan has used them; then I can appreciate them."

Voltaire laughed to scorn the idea of a perfect originality. He declares that the most original writers borrow from one another, and says that the instruction we gather from books is like fire,—we fetch it from our neighbors, kindle it at home, and communicate it to others, till it becomes the property of all. So masterly were Voltaire's imitations, that Dubucq said: "He is like the false Amphitryon; although the stranger, it is always *he* who has the air of being master of the house." Campbell, the

poet, when asked to write something original in a lady's album, said that he had nothing original in him except *original sin*,—which was also said by John Adams. Heine ridiculed the reproach of plagiarism. He boldly declared that there is no sixth commandment in art. The poet, he said, is entitled to lay his hands upon whatever material he finds necessary for his work; he may even appropriate whole pillars with their sculptured capitals, if only the temple is magnificent for which he employs them as supports. Nothing, he added, could be more absurd than to declare that a poet must find all his materials within himself, and that this only is originality. "I am reminded of a fable in which the spider, conversing with the bee, makes it a reproach against the latter that she has to collect materials from a thousand flowers for the construction of her honeycomb, and the preparation of her honey; 'whereas I,' says the spider, 'draw the original threads of my whole web out of my own body.'" Goethe held a similar opinion. "Originality!" he exclaims, "what do they mean by it? The action of the world upon us begins with the hour of our birth, and ends only with our death. It is here, there, and everywhere. There is nothing we can claim as our own, but energy, strength, and volition. Very little of me would be left if I could but say what I owe to my great predecessors and contemporaries." "*If I could but say!*" Ay, there's the rub. Who can say just what ones, of the myriad thoughts that flit through his brain, are his own, and what are not? Who can trace the origin of the multitude of ideas that since his infancy have fallen upon his mind like dust, impalpable and ever accumulating? Every day we imbibe thought unconsciously, as we inhale the atmosphere, or as the earth drinks in the dews. Morning, noon and night we are ruminating upon the ideas of others, derived from books, magazines, newspapers, conversation, lectures, speeches and sermons, and unconsciously assimilating these foreign ideas, and fitting them to our individual

uses, till they circulate like our life-blood through every vein and artery of our intellectual being, and become an indistinguishable part of ourselves. Who can say, as he draws from his well-stocked quiver a fine arrow, whether or not it has been shafted with the solid sense of Bacon, feathered with the fancy of Byron, or pointed with the logic of Chillingworth? We repeat, therefore, that the most conscientious writer finds it impossible to give credit for all his borrowed ideas. He brings forth from his storehouse things new and old, but is puzzled oftentimes to distinguish the one from the other. He finds that, as Derwent Coleridge finely says, in defending his father, the immortal "S. T. C.," from the charge of literary theft, "in an overwrought brain the door which separates the chambers of memory and imagination is so lightly hung, that it will now and then swing open, and allow the treasures of one to roll into the other." There is no man living who, if he were rigidly limited in writing or speaking to ideas which are the pure product of his own brain, would not become as dry and barren as Sahara. He would be more laconic than the Spartans, if not as dumb as the Ægyptian sphinx.

It is only by traveling out of ourselves and living in others,—by appropriating, re-creating, and remodeling the results of reading and reflection,—that we can avoid intellectual feebleness, conceit, and narrowness. Sir Joshua Reynolds told his pupils that when they had continually before them the great works of art, to impregnate their minds with kindred ideas, they were then, and not till then, fit to produce something of the same species. The greatest natural genius, he declared, could not subsist on its own stock; and he added that he who should resolve never to ransack any mind but his own would soon be reduced from mere barrenness to the poorest of all imitations; "he will be obliged to imitate himself, and to repeat what he has before repeated." "Behold," says Castera, the French translator of Camoens, "what makes

great writers! Those who pretend to give us nothing but fruit of their own growth soon fail, like rivulets which dry up in summer. Far different are those which receive in their course the tribute of a hundred rivers, and which, even in the dog-days, carry mighty waves triumphantly to the ocean."

We see thus that the very training which every writer undergoes,—to which he is universally advised to subject himself,—is inevitably destructive of personal originality. Why is he told to give his days and nights to the great masters of literature, unless that he may saturate his mind with their ideas and spirit, and form to theirs the relish of his soul? And is it strange that after years spent in imbuing his mind with their excellences, and in catching their felicities of thought and expression, these thoughts, images and phrases should give the prevailing hue to his own productions,—that these borrowed ideas should become so inextricably mingled with his own feelings and mental operations as to make almost a part of himself, and to be with difficulty distinguished from his own sentiments? Was Sir William Temple a plagiarist because he illustrated the advantage of modern over ancient learning, by comparing the former to a dwarf mounted on the shoulders of a giant,—an illustration which is quoted in Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy," ridiculed in Hudibras, and which may be traced as far back at least as to a medical poet of the twelfth century? Shall we call Thomas Fuller a thief because he says almost in the very words of Horace that "that fork must have strong tines with which you would thrust out nature?" Did Brougham plagiarize from the same author when he said: "He who is not bold enough to face the perils of the deep may hug the shore too near, and make shipwreck upon its inequalities?" Was Calhoun guilty of petty larceny when he spoke of a "masterly inactivity;" or did Sir James Mackintosh, who had long before used this "fine original expression" for which Calhoun had been complimented,

dream of theft when it was suggested to him, as it probably was, by the *strenua inertia* of Horace? Was Abraham Lincoln a plunderer because, when he said "he had no vices," he used the very words of the same author in the third Satire of the First Book,—

> "Nullane habes vitia?"

When Fillmore, upon being told that Scott had been nominated for the Presidency, said to a friend that he must now attach himself to Scott, since "more persons worshipped the rising than the setting sun," was the advice less his own, or less happy, because Pompey had said the same thing to Sylla? Was Choate a plagiarist when, imitating Grattan, he said of Massachusetts: "She will be true to the Constitution. She sat among the most affectionate at its cradle; she will follow, the saddest of the procession of sorrow, its hearse"?

When Emerson would define a great man, he can find no better definition than one of great affinities, who takes up into himself all knowables as his food. In all ages of the world the greatest geniuses have been the greatest borrowers. Greedy devourers of books, plucking out "the heart of their mystery" with astonishing quickness and facility, and blessed with memories like hooks of steel, they have not scrupled to seize and utilize every good thought they could pick up in their reading. Molière, when charged with plagiarism, declared that "he recovered his property wherever he found it." A competent critic declares that he is only Plautus in a French court-mask. Beaumarchais laughingly proclaimed that wherever he found a good thing he would appropriate it, if he needed it. Chaucer, Lowell reminds us, "invented almost nothing. Wherever he found anything directed to Geoffrey Chaucer he took it, and made the most of it." There has been much discussion about the originality of Montesquieu. "I believe him," says Professor Flint in

his "Philosophy of History," "to have been endowed with *that most valuable sort of originality which enables a man to draw with independence from the most varied sources*, and to use what he obtains according to a plan and principles, and for a purpose of his own,—*the originality of Aristotle and Adam Smith.*" Mirabeau was a sublime borrower. When he delivered his electric speeches he used to receive notes from his aids and pupils, which he passed, without pausing, into the texture of his discourse. He employed others to furnish him with the materials of his speeches, just as the statuary employs others to extract the marble from the quarry, and chip off the rough edges, and then, with the master-touches of his chisel, gives it respiration and life. So with the great painters and composers. Raphael did not disdain to transplant whole figures from Masacchio and Fra Bartolommeo. Mozart boldly pillaged from Glück and Handel; and Meyerbeer has been accused of stealing all his airs, and disguising them to hide their origin.

The drunken old dramatist, Greene, tried to convince his contemporaries that the author of Lear, because he borowed his plots, was "an upstart crow, bedecked with peacock's feathers"; but the sturdy sense of England scouted the aspersion. There were other Lears before Shakspeare's, and some passages from an old play might have been adopted by the great dramatist; but as the author of "Nugæ Criticæ" says, we feel, as we compare the two productions, that in one play we have the work of a journeyman, and that in the other a master-mind has been at work in the chambers of the old man's brain, and given us out of the same material a picture which will last while human hearts throb and thrill. Indeed, Shakspeare's genius is never more imperial than when he borrows most,—"he breathed upon dead bodies, and brought them into life."

Those who are familiar with Alexander Smith's poems

will remember his beautiful comparison of the sea to a bridegroom:

> "The bridegroom sea
> Is toying with the shore, his wedded bride,
> And, in the fullness of his marriage joy,
> He decorates her tawny brow with shells,—
> Retires a space to see how fair she looks,
> Then, proud, runs up to kiss her."

The critics pronounced this image a plagiarism from Cyril Torneur; but it was shewn, in reply, that the phenomenon here used for a poetic purpose had been employed in one way or other by generations of poets before Cyril Torneur was heard of,—that the love-sick sea had, in fact, been engaged in kissing and hugging the shore from the time of the patriarchs. Sir Arthur Helps, in a letter to the accused poet, said that the trouble with his critics was, that they could not distinguish between the man who *conquers* and the man who *steals.* In this remark we have the marrow of the whole matter. We do not cry "stop thief" when Napoleon annexes half of Europe to his empire, nor do we cry "Plagiarist!" when Shakspeare borrows a plot, or incorporates another's sentiments with his own. Grant that the finest passages of many poets are but embellished recollections of other men's productions; that Gray's "snatch a fearful joy," is the "gaudia pallent" of Statius; that "the purple light of love" is the "lumen juventæ purpureum" of Virgil; that "grim-visaged, comfortless despair," is the "grim and comfortless despair" of Shakspeare; that "pangs unfelt before" are the "pangs unfelt before" of Milton; that "mock the air with idle state" is Shakspeare's "mocking the air with colors idly spread"; that "full many a gem," etc., is a gem from Bishop Hall; grant that Ben Jonson cribbed the materials of his mosaics from Philostratus and Catullus; that Pope's fine description of the literary student who, as he climbs the Alpine heights of literature, sees

> "Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise;"

a simile which Johnson thought the finest and aptest in the language, was copied from Drummond; that Dean Swift poached on the preserves of Cyreno Bergerac; that Robert Hall "conveyed" some gems of illustration from Burke and Grattan, and that Macaulay reconveyed them from Hall; that Shelley's "Death and his brother Sleep" was borrowed from Sir Thomas Browne; that Cowper took his "cup that cheers, but not inebriates," from Berkeley's "Sirius," and his "God made the country, man made the town," from the Latin poet Varro; that Webster's "sea of upturned faces" overflowed into his page from that of Sir Walter Scott, and that a dozen of his best passages are imitations of Burke and Erskine:—does all this detract a jot or tittle from these great men's fame? Can you build a house without lumber, bricks, or stone? Can the most skilful architect do without the quarryman, bricklayer, or plasterer? Can Napoleon dispense with the recruiting-sergeant, or Paganini with the maker of Cremonas? Yet, as another has well said, "we do not rank together the great violinist and the artificer who constructed his instrument. We do not place Sir Christopher Wren and a hodman on the same level." Stonemasons collected the dome of St. Paul's, but it was a man of genius who "hung it in air." The great thinkers of every age do not differ from the little ones so much in their thoughts as in the manner in which they wreak their thoughts upon expression. It is not the conception of certain extraordinary and brilliant ideas that gives them their preëminence, but the judgment that discriminates and adequately values the ideas, the patience which arrests them in their flight, and the skill and strength which mould and condense them into consistence and form. The great poet is not one who invents wholly novel figures, but one who lays a firm hand upon shapes that have floated dimly before a thousand eyes, and fixes them forever upon the canvas. He gives to other men's inchoate thoughts artistic development and expression.

The Roman writers borrowed with such freedom from their predecessors that their literature has been called one immense plagiarism. Horace boasts of his originality,—

> "Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps :
> Non aliena meo pressi pede ;"

yet we know that he poaches on the pages of Albæus and Pindar; and Virgil "conveys" images, epithets, and even whole passages, from Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, and Ennius. He regards these writers as mere quarries for ideas, just as the builders of English country mansions used the ruins of old castles. The most original of Latin poets are usually thought to be Lucretius and Catullus, yet a high authority declares them to be only the echo of something still more ancient. So with the modern writers, there is not one of them but is indebted to his ancestors; as Dryden happily says, "we shall track him everywhere in the snow of the ancients." Spenser borrowed largely from Tasso; and Milton, "the celestial thief," is accused by Dr. Johnson of being a wholesale plagiarist. This is too sweeping a charge, but it is certain that Milton began by reproducing the classics, and was a copyist before he became an inventor of thoughts and harmonies. When he began "Paradise Lost," he had the reading of a lifetime behind him, and he drew upon his accumulated store without conscious distinction of its sources. As Mark Pattison, his latest biographer, says, "his verse flowed from his own soul, but it was a soul which had grown up *nourished with the spoil of all the ages.* * * * His diction is the elaborate outcome of all the best words of all antecedent poetry." Maffei and other Italian writers assert that the groundwork of his great epic was taken from the "Angeleïda" of Nalvazone. The influence of Tasso upon Milton is universally conceded. Hallam reminds us that being blind when he began "Paradise Lost," Milton "had only his recollection to rely upon. Then the remembrance of early reading came over his

dark and lonely path like the moon emerging from the clouds. Then it was that the Muse was truly his; not only as she poured her native inspiration into his mind, but as the daughter of memory, coming with fragments of ancient melodies, the voice of Homer, Euripides, and Tasso." Alexander Pope was the most consummate adopter and adapter of ideas that English literature can boast. It was in the prose writers of the seventeenth century, little read in his days even by scholars, that he found many of those witty sayings and axioms of moral wisdom which, polished with taste and sharpened with skill, present such rows of glittering points in his verse. Every elegant turn he met with, he introduced from native or naturalized from foreign authors; but it was usually only the raw material that he appropriated, and he set every borrowed jewel in gold. "To be selected out of a second-rate author, and put into one of Pope's lines, was the apotheosis of an expression." It is now well known that Coleridge never saw Mont Blanc, but borrowed the inspiration of his magnificent hymn from Frederica Brun. Byron, who pronounced all pretensions to originality ridiculous, borrowed not only the plans, but even to a large extent, the very language of his poems. The description of the shipwreck in Don Juan is almost a literal transcript of a narrative published many years before; and the beautiful lines on the death of Kirke White,—in which this poet is compared to a struck eagle stretched upon the plain, viewing its own feather on the arrow, the plumage that had warmed its nest, drinking the last life-drop of its blood,—are copied, almost verbatim, from an old English poet, who, in turn, it is said, had borrowed the figure from a Greek poet that lived two thousand years ago. Byron's mind has been compared to an Æolian harp; the gentlest breeze, the slightest hint, was sufficient to evoke its music; but, without this breeze, without this hint it was silent. His latest biographer admits that he hardly brought a new idea into the world, but asserts that he

quadrupled the force of existing ideas, and scattered them far and wide.

Literature abounds in stock-sayings and illustrations, which are common property. Macaulay's New Zealander, and Talleyrand's observation about language, have long pedigrees. Bacon's saying that the earliest generations of men should be called the *youngsters* rather than the *ancients*, is as old as Giordano Bruno. Matthew Arnold took his "sweetness and light" from Swift's "Battle of the Books." Paley's watch ticked in Holland before it did in England; Columbus's egg learned its trick of balancing long before the fifteenth century; and Poe's "ghastly, grim, and ancient raven" croaked to Albert Pike before it sat above Poe's chamber door.

All the arguments against Christianity to-day, which are paraded with such a flourish of trumpets, are rehashes of old ones. The Darwinian theory is but a republication with fresh illustrations, of Monboddo and Lamarck. Tyndall defends himself by showing that he has only repeated the speculations of Epictetus, Helvetius, and Descartes. Renan's "*femme hallucinée*," the hypothesis with which he accounts for the testimony of the women who saw Christ after his resurrection, is as old as Celsus. Again, according to the author of the late learned work on the "Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," the argument of this most ancient antagonist of Christianity strikingly coincides with that of Strauss, its modern foe. Like Celsus, the German skeptic denies any design in the world, any improvement or deterioration, any distinction between man and animal.* Ingersoll has shot no new arrows at Christianity, but only newly feathered and pointed the darts of Toland and Tom Paine.

So with many of the defences of Christianity. The germinal thoughts of Butler's Analogy may be dimly

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* "The Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism," American Translation, p. 104.

traced in Lactantius, in Clarke, and in Bishop Berkeley; but they are none the less Butler's because they were vaguely hinted at by others. Ideas belong not to him who has first thought them, but to him who has used them with the most effect, as industrial art-inventions belong to those who know how to apply them. They are the property, not of him who has seen them drifting by like fragments of a wreck, but of him who puts out in his boat and drags them to the land. As Paley says: "He only discovers who proves." It may be hard that the man who first dimly conceived an original idea should be deprived of the honors it confers; but if it has fallen into better hands than his, and has been more clearly, more vividly, or more completely presented than before, the world is the gainer, whatever the individual loss. Coleridge took the germinal idea of "The Ancient Mariner" from a passage of Shelrocke in "Purchas's Pilgrims," which relates the circumstance of foul weather having followed the killing of an albatross; but who else, out of so paltry an incident, could have woven in the loom of his imagination the warp and woof of that most weird and unearthly of poems—a poem so saturated with magic and snaky fascination, that, compared with it, the demonologies of Godwin, Maturin, Lewis and Shelley seem tame and cold. Goldsmith borrowed the beautiful simile which ends the description of the country clergyman in "The Deserted Village," from a poem by the Abbé de Chaulieu—a poet whose verses were on every tongue when Goldsmith traveled in France. The Abbé's lines are as follows:

> "Tel qu'un rocher dont la tête,
> Egalant le Mont Athos,
> Voit à ses pieds la tempête
> Troubler le calme des flots;
> La mer autour bruit et gronde;
> Malgré ses emotions,
> Sur son front élevé regne une paix profonde,"—

which Goldsmith thus reproduces:—

> "As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
> Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
> Though round its base the rolling clouds be spread,
> Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

Here every reader of taste can see that Goldsmith has not only surpassed the original, but by his happy application of the image to the christian preacher, has given it a moral sublimity to which it has no pretension in Chaulieu, who, Frenchman-like, applies it to his own philosophical patience under his physical maladies. So with scientific discoveries and inventions. It is none the less honor to him who discovered the art of printing that some germ of the principle had been known and in use ages before; nor is the discovery of gunpowder as a means of warfare less creditable because some inflammable composition had been used by the Romans and the Chinese for many centuries in making fireworks. Was Leverrier's location of the undiscovered planet less meritorious because, as he searched the pathless infinitude with his telescope, he availed himself of the labors and recorded demonstrations of Newton? Was, Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation less creditable because he availed himself of other men's mathematics? Grant that Morse had saturated his mind with the ideas of Priestly and Franklin, Volta and Galvani, and caught his hint of the electric telegraph from Professor Jackson as the two were breasting the Atlantic waves in the *Sully* in 1832, does this prove that Morse's name should not be yoked with the lightning in our thoughts? As well might the apple say to Newton: "If I had not dropped to the ground on the sunny afternoon when you walked in the garden, the glory of discovering the principle of gravitation would never have been yours." Glück, the father of dramatic music, confessed that the conception of the "ground tone" of one of his finest operas was the voice

of the people, of which he had heard at Vienna, crying to their Emperor for "Bread! Bread!" But was there less genius shown in thus seizing and reducing to harmony the outpourings of a nation's heart, because the idea was suggested from without? Thorwaldsen's Mercury was suggested by a lad whom he saw sitting at rest; and the action of Kean's Richard III, in his last struggle with his triumphant antagonist, when he stands, after his sword has been wrested from him, with his hand stretched out as "if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had a withering power," was borrowed, Hazlitt tells us, from the last effort of Painter in his fight with Oliver. But does this or that detract from the genius of the actor or the sculptor? Millions of other men might have seen the lad or the pugilist, but no Mercury would have sprang out of the one vision, or any masterpiece of acting out of the other.

So far are the claims of a man of genius from being invalidated because his inventions or discoveries have not been absolutely insulated from every preceding achievement, that the very opposite is true. It is only *because* of the state of a science at the time when a man takes it up that he is able to make his own peculiar discoveries. Hence, as Samuel Bailey observes, those fugitive glimpses, those scattered lights, those casual touches, which we find in writings of the same date. The minds of a number of individuals seem to be contemporaneously laboring with obscure intimations of the same truth till, in the most vigorous among them, it struggles from its obscurity and bursts into day. "The greatest inventor in science," says an eminent philosopher, "was never able to do more than to accelerate the progress of discovery." In fine, every thinker, whether inventor or writer, lives in the great ocean of human thought, and could not, if he would, divest himself of its influence. Hence it is that the same discoveries and inventions are often hit upon simultaneously in different countries, as we see in the case of the planet

Neptune, which was discovered nearly at the same time by Leverrier in France and Adams in England, and the discovery respecting the nervous system made simultaneously by Sir Charles Bell in England and Signor Bellingeri in Italy. Professor Marsh, in his "Lectures on the English Language," observes that society now is so intensely social, and men through the action of the printing-press participate so largely in one another's intellectual condition, that instances of concurrent mental action between unconnected individuals are perpetually recurring. "Not only does almost every new mechanical contrivance," says he, "originate with half a dozen different inventors at the same moment, but the same thing is true of literary creation. If you conceive a striking thought, a beautiful image, an apposite illustration, which you know to be original with yourself and delay for a twelvemonth to vindicate your priority of claim by putting it on record, you will find a dozen scattered authors simultaneously uttering the same thing."

Again, it must be remembered by those who see in every literary parallelism a deliberate plagiarism, that all truth is a unit, and hence that every man who has mental force to break through the shells and husks of things, and penetrate to their very heart and core, must of necessity bring back the same report as his predecessors. Considering how many thousand workers there have been in the fields of science and literature since the first poet sang and the first philosopher wrote, and considering that nature and truth are unvarying and eternal, is it any more surprising that they suggest to different writers the same ideas, and are described iu the same language, than that the sky, the earth, the wood and the wave should be pictured on the canvas of one painter in the same hues with which they are clothed by another? Must I call the grass *gray* to avoid the charge of plagiarism, because somebody has called it *green?* Those who object to a writer that he says nothing absolutely new, might as well object to

Nature, because in her lusty prodigality she delights in repeating herself, and reproduces the same flowers year after year. Walking in a garden, and seeing a rose, they might say! "I have met with that remark before." The question is one not of priority, but of truth; not of chronology, but of successful assimilation and expression; not whether we have nicely discriminated our borrowed thoughts from our own, but whether "we have breathed our own convictions into the thoughts that have got mixed up in our skulls," and given them a fresh vitality by giving them in language that is flavored with our own idiosyncrasy, La Bruyère said of Boileau, who abounds in imitations, that he seemed to create the thoughts of other people, so ingenious are the turns he gives to a simile or expression. Bossuet borrows freely from Tertullian, Chrysostom, and Augustine, but he does it so felicitously that his earliest editor regards him as scarcely less original when he quotes than when he invents. Sterne has shocked the moral nerves of some critics by the audacity with which, in "Tristam Shandy," he has helped himself to the ideas, and even the language, of Burton's "Anatomy"; but were two books ever more unlike than the "Anatomy of Melancholy" and "Tristam Shandy"? So Gray borrowed his jewels of phrase from all sources; but he rendered them his own by his inimitable arrangement of them, and nothing is more amazing than the transcendant originality with which, in working upon these foreign substances, his genius preserves unique, unimitating and inimitable, its own essential idiosyncrasy. He wrought his poems in precisely the way that Mozart composed his music. Nobody has ever disputed the originality of the author of "The Magic Flute"; yet his biographer, Mr. Holmes, tells us that he readily assimilated into his musical constitution all that he found suitable in the works of others as *pabulum* for his genius. He often reproduced from them whatever was striking or beautiful, not servilely, but mingling his own

nature and feeling with them, in a manner at once surprising and delightful. His example strikingly shows that not only are the originals not original, as some define originality, but that varied knowledge, whether derived from study or observation, is a necessary condition of all original conceptions properly so called. In what do the novelty and freshness of Bacon's thoughts consist? Is it not in the aptness with which he illustrates one group of ideas by another group brought from a far distant region in the realm of knowledge?

We have, therefore, little sympathy with those literary detectives who are always on the alert to detect petty parallelisms and coincidents of expression, and cry out, "Stop thief!" whenever they spy out an instance of assimilation or appropriation of thought in a work which is original in the only sense in which originality is possible. A definition of plagiarism which makes all authors plagiarists is evidently absurd. In nineteen cases out of twenty that which is denounced as such is just such plagiarism as the plants exercise upon the earth and air, or the bee upon the flowers and honeysuckles,—to organize the stolen material into higher forms and make it suitable for the food of man. But when a writer, instead of assimilating his acquisitions, is overmastered by them, and lets them assimilate him; when, instead of rifling the flowers of literature of their sweets, like the bee, to make a new compound distinct from the substances of which it is composed, he transplants the flowers bodily, stalk and root, into his own pages; when, instead of using the thoughts of other minds as fertilizing pollen to make his own more productive, and giving back what he absorbs in new conceptions,—"new by a juster application, or a more felicitous expression, or a fresh development of the original thought,"—he simply copies both sentences and paragraphs, he is a literary thief, and as such deserves to be held up to public reprobation and scorn. The true distinction between such a writer and the one who gathers

from innumerable sources the materials which he fuses into a new and homogeneous composition, is drawn in the well-known colloquy between the two broom-sellers: "I do not understand how you undersell me," said one, "for I steal my materials." "The explanation is simple," rejoined the other: "I steal my brooms ready made." Nobody ever censured Burke for expanding the "like a cloud" of Demosthenes into "the one black cloud which hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains"; but what would be thought of Webster or Canning if the former's fine personification of the power and glory of England, or the beautiful and elaborate imagery in the latter's Plymouth speech, should turn out to have been badly copied?

Are we asked, then, wherein lies the merit of a writer? We answer, in his form. His true originality lies in the plan of his work and in his style,—that manner of expression which distinguishes the mould of his genius from the mintage of any other brain. Of the novelty of his ideas he can have no guarantee, but the form in which they are conveyed is his own peculiar property. He may use the selfsame facts and ideas as another, yet so express, marshal and arrange them as to make them his own, and delight us with a new and original product. Two architects may use the same bricks and produce respectively a palace and a hovel. All painters use the same colors; but one is a Raphael or a Titian, the other exhausts his genius upon the sign-board of a country tavern.

The Art of Listening.

A GREAT deal has been written on the art of speaking; but a treatise on the art of listening would be more valuable. There are plenty of good talkers in society, but good hearers are rare. Carlyle's discourses, preached in so many volumes, with sad earnestness, on the text "Silence is golden," have borne thus far but little fruit. A Frenchman once said of a gentleman in company, in whom he could detect no other quality worthy of a compliment, that he had "a great talent for silence." This apparent *equivoque* was a real compliment, for of all gifts one of the very rarest is that self-control which enables one to hold his tongue. Few persons have reflected how difficult it is to command that attention and concentration of mind which constitute a good listener. It requires not only high moral but also rare intellectual qualities. It is not, as one is apt to suppose, a merely passive state. It implies positive labor of mind, close, consecutive thinking, and sometimes a powerful and even painful effort of the will, to arrest one's own train of ideas or dreamy reveries, and fix the mind upon the thought or reasoning of another.

Besides this power of attention, there must be also great power of sympathy,—indeed, the latter is almost essential to the former. There is an ear of the soul as well as of the body, which must be wide open if one would listen well. It has been well said that the most appreciative listening is done with the eyes. Man cannot, like the lower animals, prick up his ears or bend them forward when he wants to hear; hence the look of the eyes is the surest test of attention. All the other marks of interest

may be counterfeited. The manner may be apparently full of respect,—every word and gesture of impatience may be repressed,—and yet the wits of the seeming listener may be wool-gathering. But the eye refuses to dissemble. By its dull, vacant stare, its introspective look, or its restless wandering from place to place, it *will* betray the hypocritical hearer in spite of every attempt at deception. Hence, no unspoken affront, short of absolute rudeness, rouses resentment so readily as wandering attention manifested by wandering glances. A man's thoughts are wont to follow his eyes, and be engrossed by what they see rather than by what he hears.

To sit in dumb silence, and be for ever a recipient,—a bucket eternally pumped into, without power of reaction, as Carlyle somewhere expresses it,—is doubtless good for no man ; yet most men, it can hardly be doubted, would be benefited by oftener listening in place of talking. It is well, at times, to interchange thought, and there are moments when, as Sidney Smith said of his jokes, we must let out our ideas or burst ; yet it is evidently the listener who gets the richest harvest from conversation. It has been well said that *he who speaks, sows,—he who listens, reaps*, in colloquy. We may be neither wise nor witty ; but, listening to the acute and learned, we may make their shrewdness and knowledge in a measure our own. In conversation better than in books may we read human nature ; and a sentiment dropped burning from the lips settles more deeply in the mind than the finest writing. It was Scott, we believe, who made it a rule to pump every man upon the subjects with which he was best acquainted ; and thus from every ride in a stage-coach brought home some fact, hint, or trait of character, which added to the charm of his writings. All men have their hobbies, which they dearly love to mount,—their strong points, the subjects nearest to their hearts, and upon which they are at home in conversation,—and happy is he who turns this peculiarity in others to his own advantage. Dr. Johnson

once faced a fellow-traveller in a stage-coach, from whom he found that every attempt to draw out a scintilla of information was like trying to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. "Try me on leather," said the poor fellow in despair. The doctor tried him on leather, and found that regarding that topic, he had both *soul* and *understanding* "The study of books," says Montaigne, "is a languishing and feeble motion that heats not; but if I converse with a man of mind, and no flincher, who presses hard upon me, and digs at me right and left, his imagination raises up mine; it stimulates me to something above myself."

Of all bores, the loquacious are the most disagreeable; the society enjoyed by such is generally a series of *first invitations.* Burns has well portrayed them in his description of the "venerable corps," of excessively good and rigidly righteous people,—whose life he compares to a well-going mill, supplied with store of water, and whose machinery goes on in one unvarying clack, their hopper constantly ebbing, but never exhausted. It is amusing to see how one of these persons, who has been gabbling for an hour or less, drops his countenance as if he had been shot, or seized with lockjaw, the moment any one of his hearers interposes a single remark. On the contrary, the good listener is always welcome in society,—even the wisest preferring his character to that of superior men, because he hearkens with respect, and studiously gathers every word that falls. Some years ago, in England, an old man left a large legacy to a person who was not a relation, because he had had the complaisance patiently to listen to him. Napoleon, on a certain occasion, was so pleased with the attention of Madame De Rémusat when he talked, that he proclaimed her a woman of intellect, though at that time she had not addressed two consecutive sentences to him. Fontenelle, in his old age, said that he willingly left the world, since there was no one in it who knew how to listen to him. Is it not strange that there should be so much egotism in society,—such an

eagerness to teach rather than to learn; to instruct others, rather than to grow wise one's self? Yet there are many persons who, apparently, never have the slightest suspicion, while gabbling, that possibly another may wish to edge in a word. They would as soon suppose that a beggar wished to bestow alms upon them, as that anybody else could wish to speak while they are ready to save him the trouble. A dull book is endurable. We can lay it down without offence. But to a dull talker we are compelled to listen with "sad civility," though his babble be, like Gratiano's, a few grains of wheat to a bushel of chaff. It is said that Kant, the German philosopher, who had a habit of sometimes uttering his thoughts audibly, but unconsciously, when alone, was once dining at a friend's, where he was bored by the dullness of the conversation, when, with honest simplicity, he unconsciously, but audibly, soliloquized, "My God what an intolerably tedious company this is!" A few such soliloquists in society might rid it of its babblers.

It is said that the elder Mathews talked so much and so fast that he contracted a disease of the tongue; but if this statement were true, we should see hundreds of others to-day suffering from the same disease. It is not usually among scholars that one finds such monopolists, but among those who mingle largely in society, and boast of their "knowledge of the world." Hazlitt has justly said that there are few things more contemptible than the conversation of these persons,—the mere men of the town. It is made up of the technicalities and cant of all professions, without the spirit or knowledge of any. "It is flashy and vapid, or like the rinsings of different liquors at a night cellar, instead of a bottle of fine old port."

The "Autocrat" finely says, in one of his early papers, that the whole force of conversation depends on how much you can take for granted. "Vulgar chess-players have to play their game out; nothing short of the bru-

tality of an actual checkmate satisfies their dull apprehensions. But look at two masters of that noble game! White stands well enough, so far as you can see; but Red says mate in six moves. White looks—nods; the game is over. Just so in talking with first-rate men; especially when they are good-natured and expansive, as they are apt to be at table."

It has been remarked by De Quincy that, as a rule, the French, in spite of their reputation for loquacity, have the keenest sense of all that is odious or ludicrous in prosing, and universally have a horror of *les longueurs*. Yet he notes one "shocking anomaly" or exception in their code of good taste as applied to conversation, viz., the case of narrators or *raconteurs*. Of all the bores whom man in his folly hesitates to hang, the most insufferable, he declares, is the teller of "good stories,"—a nuisance which, he asserts, should be put down by cudgeling, by submersion in horse-ponds, or any mode of abatement, as summarily as men would combine to suffocate a vampire or a mad dog.

It seems to be an almost inevitable result, when great wits are pitted against each other in the social circle, that the wish to shine prevents the conversation from taking an easy, natural course. Every one is anxious to seize as it flies by the opportune moment for saying his brilliant things, and in many cases the *apropos* is very far-fetched. Marmontel, in picturing the fine conversations of his day, tells us that in Marivaux, the impatient wish to display his sagacity and finesse was conspicuously manifest. Montesquieu waited with more calmness till the ball should come to him, but he waited for it nevertheless. Marian watched for the favorable opportunity. Astruc disdained to wait. There is, perhaps, hardly any greater nuisance than when a company at dinner, or in a drawing-room, are compelled to listen to two or three literary lions who are trying to dazzle it with their brilliant wit. No doubt they enjoy this, but they show that they lack

the very first element of good breeding, which is courtesy; and it is absurd to call their talk conversation when it is confined to themselves. A still greater nuisance is when two men interrupt the easy flow of talk by a controversial discussion. As De Quincey says, "mere good sense is sufficient, without any experience at all of high life, to point out the intolerable absurdity of allowing two angry champions to lock up and sequestrate, as it were, the whole social enjoyment of a large party, and compel them to sit in sad civility, witnesses of a contest which can interest the majority neither by its final object nor by its management." Listening to such logomachy is even more disagreeable than sitting within ear-shot of "the young college don who solves the enigma of Free Will and constructs a Philosophy of Being in twenty minutes."

Hazlitt tells us that the best converser he ever knew was the best listener. "I mean Northcote, the painter. Painters, by their profession, are not bound to shine in conversation, and they shine the more. He lends his ear to an observation as if you had brought him a piece of news, and enters into it with as much avidity and earnestness as if it interested him personally." Romilly was a similar talker; his conversation never indicated a wish to display, but flowed from the abundance of a refined and richly informed understanding. Carlyle, on the other hand, is a poor listener. He gives no one else a chance, but, according to Margaret Fuller, bears down all opposition, not only by his wit and onset of words resistless in their sharpness as so many bayonets, but by actual physical superiority, raising his voice and rushing on his opponent with a torrent of sound.

It is said that Thiers, the late French president, was an interminable monologist, and it was only when he shaved that one could get a chance of being listened to by him. Only while the razor was at his throat was he silent, or did he vouchsafe attention. Thiers could speak from morning till night unwearied, with ever new

sparkling thoughts, ever new plays of wit flashing forth rejoicing his audience, teaching, blinding,—in short, a spoken firework. The colloquial despotism of such a man is comparatively excusable; yet even from monopolists of far inferior gifts the skillful listener will glean many kernels of wheat among the chaff. Madame Geoffrin, who was impatient of prolonged talk, was asked how she could bear the conversation of a very tiresome man for three or four hours. "I made him talk of himself and his affairs," was the reply, "and in talking of ourselves, we become interesting to others." Sainte-Beuve states that one day when she saw the good Abbé de Saint-Pierre installing himself at her house for a whole winter's evening, she was frightened for a moment, but drawing inspiration from the desperate situation, she did so well that she utilized the worthy abbé, and made him positively amusing. He was completely astonished at it himself; and when, as he withdrew, she complimented him upon his good conversation, saying: "You have been delightful to-day; you have said many witty things," he replied: "Madame, I am but an instrument; you have played on it according to your own taste, and *you* know how to sound it."

Who are Gentlemen?

> "A gentleman?
> What, o' the wool-pack? or the sugar chest?
> Or lists of velvet? which is't, pound or yard,
> You vend your gentry by?"

DEMOCRATIC as we profess to be in this country, and though we are as fond of denouncing aristocrats as were the "sansculottes" at the beginning of the French Revolution, there is, nevertheless, hardly an American town of a thousand inhabitants where there are not certain families that pique themselves on being "genteel." But what do they mean by "genteel"? The word is one which some persons have continually on their lips, yet there is hardly one, perhaps, between the two covers of Webster's "Unabridged," the precise meaning of which they would be more sorely puzzled to define. Gentility,—what is it? It is harder to define than the term with which Sir Robert Peel was wont to puzzle the financiers,—"What is a pound?" We all have some dim, shadowy ideas of the thing; but what mental chemist has yet appeared gifted with powers so subtle as to analyze the elements of this mysterious attribute of humanity? or what lexicographer, living or dead, has presumed to expound to the world the curious substance or essence of which it is composed? Ask any man who is in the habit of applying and denying this epithet to scores of his species, *Who* or *what* is a gentleman? and the chances are that you will get a reply about as precise and satisfactory as Bardolph's definition of "accommodation;" gentleman, that is a—gentleman; or when a person is—being—whereby—he may be thought to be a

gentleman; which is an excellent thing. All will unhesitatingly agree that a man well born, having an independent fortune, an upright, generous, high-minded character, with courteous manner, and withal good clothes, is a gentleman. But the puzzle is to tell *how many* of these qualities are essential to give one a claim to gentility,—for it is on this point that men's sentiments so widely vary. Undoubtedly there are in every case many seemingly trivial but really important circumstances to be taken into account before we may pronounce a man to be, absolutely and unqualifiedly, a gentleman; and hence, it behooves us always to be exceedingly cautious, for to a nice mind, ardently engaged in the pursuit of truth, a hair's-breadth distinction is found oftentimes more obstinately irreconcilable than a glaring discrepancy.

Dr. Johnson defines a gentleman as a man of birth, which is no doubt the etymological sense of the word. A gentleman was originally a man of noble family, or *gens*, as it was called in Latin. How the barbarians who conquered the Romans came to use the word as a word of honor has been much disputed. Some say that as the barbarians were *gentiles*, or outer nations to the Romans, their leaders assumed the appellation as one of honor to distinguish themselves from the degenerate people they had enslaved. This was the learned Selden's view, but Gibbon preferred to derive the word from the civilian's use of it as synonemous with *ingenuus*. A "gentle" (its derivative) is used as the opposite to "simple." Still another learned writer asserts that no one is strictly a gentleman but he who can trace himself to the first barbarian conquerors. The term is evidently of great antiquity, as the uncertainty about its meaning plainly shows, and all the facts go to prove that gentility, which is always spoken of as a matter of blood, was an affair of race. The original gentlemen, far back in the ages, were distinguished by larger size, and greater strength and energy, than other men, and thus became their governors and rulers. In the

course of time the descendants and heirs of such persons came to have means to maintain an outward show of superior elegance, with leisure to cultivate the graces of social life, so that they were distinguished from the laboring classes by greater refinement of manners and a more tasteful dress. To-day, neither birth nor wealth, nor both together, make a gentleman, unless other qualities are added; and even a person of the meanest birth, if endowed with the qualities supposed to be annexed to gentle blood, is often entitled a gentleman because he possesses a gentleman's nature. Beau Brummell, at one time the ideal of English patricians, was the son of a petty lodging-house keeper, and the grandson of a menial servant.

This peculiarity of English society has always been a standing puzzle to foreigners, who cannot understand how a man can be a *gentilhomme* who is not *gentilis*, or of noble race. It has been well observed that what the foreigner means by this expression is strictly applicable to the English gentry, who are descendants of the old feudal landlords and bearers of coats of armor,—are *gentilhommes* in the primitive sense of the word, and so noble; while the lord, in spite of his peerage and coronet, may be of original most immediately plebeian. "How is it," writes Tocqueville in 1853, "that the word *gentleman*, which in our language denotes a mere superiority of blood, with you is now used to express a certain social position and amount of education independent of birth; so that in two countries the same word, has entirely changed its meaning? When did this revolution take place? How, and through what transitions? If I had the honor of a personal acquaintance with Mr. Macaulay, I should venture to write to ask him these questions. In the excellent history which he is now publishing he alludes to this fact, but he does not try to explain it." These questions, which were put to Macaulay, and which he could not answer, have been answered with very poor success by M.

Taine, in his "Notes on England." He sees clearly, however, that the word has in England no fixed and well-defined meaning, being indiscriminately used to express birth, an independent fortune, habits of luxury and ease, education, tone of mind, bearing and manners, in conjunction or apart. Thus B——, when he said to M. Taine, of "a great lord, a diplomatist," that he was "no gentleman," referred to manners, conduct, or character. Archdeacon Hare declares that "a Christian is the Almighty's gentleman; a gentleman, in the vulgar, superficial way of understanding the word, is the devil's christian." Dr. Arnold wrote from France that he was struck by the total absence of gentlemen there, whether the people were judged by their appearance and manners, or by their education and sentiments; and he doubted whether a real English Christian gentleman, of manly heart and enlightened mind, was not more than Guizot or Sismondi could comprehend. An English reviewer increases the confusion by quoting "the well known Irish boast" that an Irish gentleman would be the most perfect gentleman in the world *if you could but meet with him.*

That eminent professor of gentility, Lord Chesterfield, deemed wealth a *sine qua non* of a gentleman. But money alone, it is clear, cannot make a gentleman, though there are many occasions when, to entitle one's self to that appellation, it is very necessary to have a good supply of bank-notes. "You are no gentleman," said a boot-black in a tavern to a guest who had given him but five cents, —all the change he had in his wallet. Here in the eyes of "boots," the payment of five cents additional would have constituted the gentleman. "What sort of person is that new boarder of yours?" asked a lady of the landlord of a hotel. "He is a printer by trade," was the reply, "but is very much the gentleman." In this case, being a gentleman implied chiefly the regular and prompt payment of bills. In England a gentleman need not pay his debts unless his creditor has no security but his bare word,

and financial obligations which relate to horses are sacred above all other obligations. Maginn, in "Old Ebony," quoted an Irish authority who laid it down that for duelling purposes any one might be considered a gentleman who wore a clean shirt once a week. An English writer says that in the snuggery of an inn bar the appellation is in great request; and to descend to the bottom of the scale, he has more than once heard a prisoner in the dock declaring that "he warn't a doin' nuffin' till the *genelman* kem and tuk him up,"—an epithet which has a bland and conciliatory influence on the policeman.

The Byronic idea of a gentleman is well known,—small hands and feet, high forehead, curly hair, and a delicate taste for gin at night and hock and soda water in the morning. In the year 1500 a gentleman is represented as saying: "To blow a neat blast on the horn, to understand hunting, to carry a hawk handsomely and train it, that is what becomes the son of a gentleman; but *as for book learning he should leave that to louts.*" In the time of Charles the Second, both gentlemen and ladies prided themselves on the fact that they could not spell the commonest words correctly. To do nothing for a livelihood has long been the extra-legal definition,—a remarkable illustration of which was given in England, in an assault case some years ago, at the Middlesex sessions. A prosecutor was asked if he was a gentleman; he replied in the affirmative, and being next asked if he had not been an omnibus-driver, he replied: "Not for a living." "Will you swear you have not been an omnibus-driver?" pressed the defendant's attorney. "I am a gentleman," was the answer, "but I have driven an omnibus by way of amusement. I never did anything to earn a living." According to this theory, one may be an omnibus-driver and even a clown,—for such the prosecutor had been,—and yet not forfeit one's claims to be a gentleman, provided he does it in idleness, or from a positive taste for the business. The forfeiture of the gentle condition

lies in acting from a sordid motive. This view was confirmed, about thirty years ago, by a decision in an English bankruptcy court. A person offered as a surety was objected to by counsel because, while he was described as "a gentleman," he was really a clerk in a steam-packet company. The objection, which would have been considered ridiculous by a genealogist or a herald, was held to be fatal. According to Aristotle, all forms of labor which require physical strength are degrading to a freeman. The prince Lee Boo, who concluded that in England the hog was the only gentleman because he was the only animal that did not labor, had some grounds for his opinion. In Otaheite, a chieftain is fed by his attendants like a baby, because it does not comport with his dignity to feed himself. As a rule, a calling is against a man in England, with the exception of the aristocratic professions; and even these, an Edinburgh Reviewer thinks should be avoided, as the gentleman *par eminence* should resemble Voltaire's trees, of which, when a visitor was complimenting him on their looking so fine and flourishing, the wit said : "Yes, they ought, for they have nothing else to do."

In the estimation of the vulgar—"the great vulgar and the small," as Cowley classes them—genteel clothes are one of the main characteristics of a gentleman. "Why do you call him a gentleman ?" asked a magistrate in one of our cities of a sailor, who had charged a youth, whom he described as a gentleman, with robbing him. "Because he wore *a long-tailed coat,*" replied the tar. There is something peculiarly significant in the unhesitating readiness and confidence of this reply. Honest Jack well knew the defendant's moral obliquities; he knew he had violated the laws of God and man; he knew that it was only by false promises to Snip the tailor that he was enabled to "cut a figure" in fashionable apparel; but still there was no getting over the stubborn fact—he wore a long-tailed coat, and so long as he *did* so it was impossible to impugn his claim to be a gentleman. Let those who unthinkingly

laugh at Jack's beau ideal of gentility turn their eyes inward to their own ideas on the subject, and ask themselves if their own sentiments are not often quite as ridiculous. Are there not many occasions when they peremptorily decide a man to be no gentleman because he wears a brown coat instead of a black one, a frock instead of a dress coat, or carries a red handkerchief instead of a white one ? The essential qualities of a gentleman depend neither upon the tailor nor upon the toilet; and yet a decent regard to dress and cleanliness is evidently one of the marks of a gentleman. A scavenger would hardly be regarded as a gentleman, though he might have many gentlemanly qualities; but a man of the noblest blood and finest manners, who despises him because he is a scavenger, is assuredly not a gentleman. It is said that Burke, when a person expressed surprise because he touched his hat to a footman, replied: "Sir, would you have me outdone in courtesy by a footman ?"

Some persons regard politeness as the criterion of a gentleman. It is true that one cannot be a gentleman without being polite; but, on the other hand, it is equally true that one may be polite without being a gentleman. A man may very politely lie; borrow money, which he never means to return, in the politest way possible; or politely make you a present of articles which he has stolen. He may be profligate, licentious, knavish, selfish, a black-leg, gambler—nay, an assassin even—yet a very Castlereagh in his manners. He may, in fine, be a perfectly gentlemanlike or polite scoundrel; but a scoundrel certainly cannot be a gentleman.

Of all men, Robert Burns seems to have had the most eccentric and hopelessly unfashionable notions of what makes a gentleman. Think of the more than Egyptian darkness of one who could write thus wildly:

> " What though on homely fare we dine,
> Wear hodden gray and a' that,
> Gi'e fools their silk, and knaves their wine,
> A man's a man for a' that."

James the First had notions equally eccentric on this subject. When his nurse followed him from Edinburgh to London to entreat him to make her son a gentleman,—"My good dame," said the king, "I can make him a lord, but it is out of my power to make him a gentleman." Yet one of his predecessors did create a gentleman,—John Kingston, whom *ad ordinem generosorum adoptabat*,—but the case stands alone. Sir Robert Peel declared that in such and all other cases "it took three generations to make a gentleman." The reason of this doubtless is the opinion that some portion of the vulgarity of the founder of a family will descend to his immediate descendants who have been reared with him; and that it is only by those who have been *always* in the class of gentry that their habits and manners will be exhibited unconsciously and in every respect.

That gentility builds a high partition wall around the persons who practise it,—a wall which, like a sunk fence in an English park, is not seen in the distance, but is very hard to climb over,—we all know; and perhaps the most puzzling fact about this wall is that, like the horizon, as you advance toward it, it continually flies before you. Some men claim to be genteel on account of their birth, others on account of their clothes; some base their pretensions on a door-plate; some are genteel because their great-great-grandfathers were colonels in the militia, others because they are justices of the peace; one family by a front pew at church, another by a private box at the opera; some because they are related to the Simpkinses, others because they reside on the same street with the Simpkinses.

Some writers have attempted to define gentility by negatives, which is certainly easier than to do it by positives. Thus, a late English author complains that it is not genteel to earn your bread; but it is highly genteel to work at some utterly worthless and silly piece of finery, and to sell the same in the name of charity at a fancy

fair. It is never genteel to speak your mind, but it is so to use a false periphrasis, and with a complimentary turn to intimate a falsehood. It is not genteel to have any opinion, and to think for yourself; but it is so to follow the dictates of an injurious fashion, even if they should be injurious to the health, or positively immoral and noxious to the soul. It is a curious fact connected with this subject, that, in spite of its metaphysical difficulties, women, from their superior acuteness and delicacy of discrimination, divide and subdivide gentility as easily as quicksilver. They have their "respectable sort of people," "very respectable," "highly respectable," "extremely respectable," and "*most* respectable," ranging from the lowest positive to the highest superlative, each weighed in a verbal hair-balance, and as distinctive in their minds as the degrees of hot, hotter, hottest, on the scale of a thermometer. In spite of this conflict of opinions, and though the boundary between the genteel and ungenteel is vague and shadowy, yet we feel, like the genteel young barber in Dickens's story, that "we must draw a line somewheres." Being a shaver of the chins of genteel persons only, he refused, upon a notable occasion, to reap the stubble from a dustman's. "Why," cried the injured individual, his gentility being touched, "I seed you a shavin' a baker t'other day." "Ah!" returned the head-dresser, "we must draw a line somewheres; I draws it at journeymen bakers; I can't shave you." In England one of the most unerring tests of gentility is propriety of conduct and demeanor,—a rigid observance of "the linen decencies" of life. No merit quite counteracts the want of this, whilst this sometimes stands in lieu of all. According to this theory, a man who rigidly observes the rules of etiquette,—who never pours his tea into a saucer, nor eats his peas with a knife, nor speaks in company without an introduction, etc., etc.—is a gentleman; and hence George IV., who was so ignorant that he could hardly spell, and who in heart and soul was a thorough

snob,—whom Thackeray has described as "a waistcoat, an under-waistcoat, another under-waistcoat, and then nothing,"—was pronounced, on the ground of his grand and suave manners, "the first gentleman of Europe"; an appellation which would be regarded as an exquisite sarcasm, did we not know that it was given in all seriousness.

One of the most daring and decided opinions that we have known to be volunteered concerning the meaning of this perplexing term was that given by a witness in Thurtell's case, who, on being asked by the judge his reason for affirming that the defendant was a gentleman, replied: "Because he keeps a gig." In this brief answer we have a flood of light on the subject; volumes could not have shed more. On the whole, it may be questioned whether there is any more patent or glaring test of what is popularly regarded as gentility, adapted to all countries, challenging as it does the eyes of all the world, than a carriage. In England carriages are of as many grades as there are shades of rank:—the ducal carriage, with its liveried footmen and apoplectic coachman, the lordly landau, the easy calèche, the elegant barouche, the dashing phaeton, the comfortable chariot, the luxurious *vis-à-vis*, the economical clarence, the brougham, etc., all mark so many degrees on the barometer of respectability. Quite different from this and all the preceding tests was the opinion of gentility given by an Irish gentleman, whose debts more than doubled his estate. Some person having spoken before him of a man who had the reputation of being a gentleman—"He a gentleman! he!" was the indignant reply; "why, it is impossible. Do you know that the fellow never owed a hundred dollars in his life?" The gentle Isaiah Rynders, who acted as marshal at the time the pirate Hicks was executed in New York, had doubtless similar notions of gentility, for, after conversing a moment with the culprit, he said to the bystanders: "I asked the *gentleman* if he desired to address the audience,

but he declined." In a similar spirit Booth, the assassin, when he was surrounded in the barn where he was shot like a beast, offered to pledge his word "*as a gentleman*" to come out and try to shoot one or two of his captors.

Whatever the difficulty attending the solution of this question, of one thing we may be sure, that there cannot be a surer proof of low origin, or of an innate meanness of disposition, than to be always thinking and prating of being genteel. The most vulgar of all things is pretension, for it is the sign of a low and vulgar mind. All the homeliness of the poor, the *gaucheries* and blunders of the unpolished, and even the provincialisms of the illiterate, are as the dust in the balance as regards vulgarity, compared with the affectation that is always trying to seem fine. The one thing which distinguishes the truly great, either by birth or mental acquirements, is repose. A great man never strains and tries to make himself greater than he is, any more than a giant tries to stand upon tiptoe. Both are conscious of their own true height; and this consciousness is so true that it is found and recognized, not only in the leaders of the *ton* in Paris, but in the Hindoo and Chinese gentleman, and in the Indian of the Rocky Mountains. The true secret, the quintessence of all gentlemanhood, is a quiet, undemonstrative bearing, and a disposition to look upon others as being as worthy as one's self. There can be no greater mistake, therefore, than to suppose, as many do, that gentlemanliness is an outward thing, a matter of form and ceremony, and that its essence lies in a punctilious observance of etiquette, in the elegant bow, the courteous and polished speech, the graceful restoration of a fan, the quick presentation of a dropped handkerchief, and other forms of exterior behavior which may indicate a knowledge of "fashionable life," yet spring from a heart full of the intensest selfishness. True politeness is not a thing of formality and ceremony; it consists in no artificial smiles or precise carriage of the body, but in an earnest and sincere desire

to promote the happiness of those with whom one comes in contact, in a willingness to sacrifice one's own ease and comfort to the enjoyment of others.

The poor negro woman who found Mungo Park perishing under the palm trees of Africa, and who led him to her hut and supplied him with food, and lulled him to sleep with her simple songs, it has been justly said was truly polite. Sir Philip Sidney, the glass of English knighthood, was most truly a gentleman when, as he lay bleeding upon the field of Zutphen, he denied himself the draught of cool water that was brought to quench his mortal thirst that it might be given to a dying soldier. Joseph Paice, the London merchant of whom Charles Lamb wrote as follows, was a gentleman *intus et in cute:* "I have seen him stand bareheaded, smile if you please, to a poor servant girl while she has been inquiring of him the way to some street, in such a posture of unforced civility as neither to embarrass her in the acceptance nor himself in the offer of it. He was no dangler, in the common acceptation of the term, after women, but he reverenced, and upheld in every form in which it came before him, *womanhood.* I have seen him,—nay, smile not,—tenderly escorting a market-woman whom he had encountered in a shower, exalting his umbrella over her poor basket of fruit that it might not receive no damage, with as much carefulness as if she had been a countess. To the reverend form of Female Eld he would yield the wall, though it were to an ancient beggar-woman, with more ceremony than we can afford to show our grandams. He was the Preux Chevalier of his age; the Sir Calidore or Sir Tristan to those who have no Tristans to defend them. The roses that had long faded thence still bloomed for him in those withered and yellow cheeks."

A story is told of a poor drover who was driving his cattle to market, and meeting a lady whom the drove compelled to turn out from the path into the deep snow, —"Madame" said he, "if the cattle knew as well as I

what they should do, you should not walk in the snow." Here was genuine politeness. Such a man, though rough and awkward in his manners, coarse in speech, and clad in homespun, is essentially a gentleman; while many a finical and smirking ape, who prides himself upon the immaculate purity of his white kid gloves, and the graceful air with which he enters a drawing-room, or lifts his hat as he meets an acquaintance, is an incarnation of rudeness and incivility.

Robert Burns showed himself a gentleman when jeweled duchesses were charmed with his ways; and so did Dr. Arnold, when the poor woman felt that he treated her like a lady; and Chalmers, when every old woman in Morningside was elated by his courteous salute. Dr. Hopkins showed himself a gentleman, when seeing a delicate woman once nauseated by coming into an atmosphere which he and his brethren had polluted with tobacco smoke, he put away the almost universal clerical pipe of which he was so fond, never to take it up again. But Johnson, who silenced an objector with "Sir, I perceive you are a vile Whig," who ate his food like a famished wolf, and who deferred so little to his friends that they could differ from him only in silence, was not a gentleman, though he had many manly qualities. Nor was Lord Chesterfield a gentleman, though he had blue blood in his veins, and displayed all the outward characteristics of a gentleman, because beneath his exquisitely polished manners lay the heart of a libertine and the soul of a sneak. His famous "Letters," once so lauded as a manual of deportment, embody a false philosophy, because they are based upon the idea that polite manners consist only of external graces, and can be learned by rule. The truth is, that the essential characteristics of a gentleman are not an outward varnish or veneer, but inward qualities, developed in the heart. They are a form, not a garment of the mind, and cannot be put on or off at will. They are the outgrowth of a noble and kindly nature, which manifests

itself in spontaneous acts of courtesy and grace. Hence the absurdity of the remark we sometimes hear that a certain person "can be a gentleman when he pleases." The truth is, that he who can be a gentleman when he pleases never pleases to be anything else. A man may simulate the outward mark of a gentleman, speaking with practised intonation, and bowing with well studied grace though he is vulgar to the very core ; but he will lack the charm of unconsciousness which is one of nature's finest gifts, the grace that is beyond the reach of art, and will be no more a gentleman in thought and feeling then the tinseled actor who struts during his brief hour on the stage is the monarch his costume would bespeak him. A celebrated actress, who had to personate queens on the stage said that she found it was absurd to attempt to be a queen during two or three hours in a day when she had not acted and felt as a queen during the rest of the day ; and so the man who is a "gentleman when he chooses to be" only personates the character,—never *is* what he purports to be. He has the smell of the footlights about him, and can never cheat a practised eye.

> "The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
> His want in forms, for fashion's sake,
> Will let his coltish nature break
> At seasons through the gilded pale."

The first principle of all true politeness is deference manly, genial, natural deference; and this can be no more acquired by studying manuals of deportment than a man can become a swimmer by reading treatises on hydrostatics, or a statesman by studying parliamentary debates. To the attainment of this end familiarity with St. John and St. Paul will conduce more than all the books of etiquette that were ever published. The latter teach only external politeness, which, as we have already said, is only the husk or shell of true politeness,—is, in fact, so far as the essence of the thing is concerned, no politeness

at all, though with many it is the hinge upon which all their social conduct turns, while in mingling with others of a different temperament they freeze, as does the wintry air in nature, the kindlier feelings of the heart, and reduce everything to a smooth surface, polished but cold, like a sheet of ice. Many a man who is rough and even boorish in manners has a warm and generous heart; and many a one who is reckless of the comfort of others seeks by a scrupulous observance of etiquette and ceremony to hide his real indifference to the happiness of his fellow men. When we see a person who evinces on all occasions a delicate regard for the rights and feelings of others, however inferior in wealth, dress or station; "who is slow to take offense, as being one who never gives it, and who is slow to surmise evil, as being one that never thinks it;" who betrays no anxiety to engross the best seats at the public table, in the car, or in the concert-room; who at his meals prefers to carve for others the juiciest slices, rather than for himself; who speaks as respectfully to a peasant as he would to a king, and is as prompt to offer his umbrella in a rainstorm to an old lady as to a young one; when, in short, we see a person acting always upon the golden rule of doing unto others "whatsoever he would that they should do unto him,"—then we feel that we have looked upon one who is, in all the essential elements, a gentleman. But, after all our attempts to define that whose essential quality is as subtle as the aroma of a flower, we may conclude that the highest significance of the term was reached in the reverential language of Dekker, who called the founder of Christianity "the first true gentleman that ever breathed." Chaucer, too, in his "Romaunt of the Rose," has given an exquisite picture of the true gentleman:

> "But understond in thine entent
> That this is not mine entendement
> To clepe no wight in no age
> Only gentle for his linages;

But who is so virtuous,
And in his port not outrageous,
When such one thou seest thee beforne,
Though he be not gentle borne,
Thou maiest well saine this in soth
That he is gentle, because he doth
As longeth to a gentleman."

Office-seeking.

The rising unto place is laborious, and by pains men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base, and by indignities men come to dignities.—BACON.

SOME years ago a Washington letter-writer, describing a visit to General Cass, reported him to have said: "Office-seeking, in men, women and children, has become our national malady. God only knows how it is to be checked, or in what direction the cure lies." This unlucky speech provoked a volley of jibes and sarcasms from the press, by which its author was regarded very much in the light of a thief bellowing "stop thief!" in a crowd. Having by assiduous effort climbed nearly to the topmost bough of the official tree, where snugly perched ed he could swing to and fro, and regale himself at leisure on its golden fruit, the old gentleman suddenly turned up his eyes in horror at the mania of office-seeking, and began thoughtfully considering the means of abating it. Such spectacle reminds us of the distillers in the olden time, who, having filled their coffers by the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits, turned round in their old age, and becoming presidents of temperance societies, denounced in fiery periods the traffickers in "wet damnation."

Consistent or inconsistent in his denunciations, General Cass did not exaggerate in declaring office-seeking to be "our national malady." There is probably no other country in the world where the appetite for place and patronage is so universal and so craving. In view of the fact that the very best office for any man is that which he can make for himself by energy, industry, tact and faith; that pri-

vate life offers ten times more inducements to an upright, ambitious man than any place within the people's gift; and above all, that the man who holds office for a few years loses all taste and energy for the ordinary pursuits of life, —it is marvelous to see what a greed for the loaves and fishes of office has seized upon all classes of the American people. Scarcely is a new president elected ere he is surrounded by a sea of upturned faces, with jaws distended, ready to catch the smallest morsel that may be thrown from the public trough. For months afterward the White House and the doors of the departments are besieged by a ravenous crowd of applicants begging for sops from the public table. Probably Washington was never before so overrun with political mendicants as during the first few months of Grant's administration. All the hotels were full of keen, gray-eyed men who longed to fill for four years some pet place under the government. The streets were thronged with them; the steamers and the railway carriages, the public departments, the steps of the senators' dwellings, the lobbies of the capital, the president's mansion, were crowded with long-limbed, nervous, eager-eyed men, who had hurried on the wings of steam to Washington to concentrate in one focus on the mind of the president all the myriad influences which, by letter, testimonial, personal application, unceasing "canvass," and sleepless solicitation they could collect together. "Every Senator," says a Washington correspondent, writing at the time, "has a *clientelle* more numerous than had the most popular young Roman noble who ever sauntered down the Via Sacra. If one of them ventures out of cover the cry is raised, and he is immediately run to earth. The printing presses are busy with endless copies of testimonials, which are hurled at everybody with reckless profusion." The hungry swarms that killed Harrison outright, shortened the days of Taylor, and gave Lincoln nearly as much trouble as the rebellion itself, were outnumbered by the hosts of patriots who besieged and beseeched Grant that

they might serve their country, and draw salaries for the same. So violent at times has been the pressure in the departments, that roundabouts, it is said, have been adopted as the uniform,—the officials finding skirts a serious impediment to locomotion, as the cormorants would grab at their coat-tails when they darted from door to door.

As at Washington, so at the state capitals, and wherever there are offices, even with starvation salaries, to fill. The scramble of fifty applicants for every vacancy in the post-office or police force of Chicago is no anomaly, but a single example of the mania that rages throughout the country. A Massachusetts newspaper states that at a political convention, held a few years ago at Worcester, in that state, for the nomination of a governor, there were numbers of respectable men, with anxious faces, eager eyes, and busy tongues, engaged in electioneering for offices. The second place on the ticket, a comparatively insignificant position, was sought for by a sufficient number of able-bodied and able-minded men to form a military company. There were embryo treasurers, auditors, and secretaries enough, aching for office and begging aid to get it, to manage the finances of France; while three or four of the cleverest fellows in the commonwealth crossed and recrossed one another's paths in the halls of the hotels and the lobbies of the convention hundreds of times, in eager, personal striving against one another for the office of attorney-general, and succeeded in dividing the convention so that no one obtained a majority of votes.

It was not always thus that office was regarded by the people of this country. Within this century, and even within the last fifty years, a revolution has taken place in the public sentiment on the subject. In the ante-revolution times, office-holding was regarded like serving on the jury, as a burden, to be avoided rather than coveted. So deep and general was the feeling, that it became necessary to enforce the acceptance of office by legal

penalties. The private citizen who shunned notoriety or deemed his time too precious to permit him to serve his country, was obliged to purchase his exemption by a fine. In 1632 the General Court of Plymouth passed an act that "whoever should refuse the office of governor should pay £20 sterling, unless he should be chosen two years successively, and whoever should refuse the office of councillor or magistrate should pay £10." When afterward the people had become richer, and with wealth had acquired leisure, they were more willing to accept office, but they never thought of nominating themselves, much less of making stump-speeches, going about to beg for votes, packing conventions with their friends, or resorting to any of the other degrading arts that are now employed by the successful politician. Many of the great men who then took office did so with reluctance—electioneering, if they did so, *to prevent* their nomination—declining a reëlection; and if they served a second term, it was because the people, knowing their fitness, dragged them from the quiet and seclusion of the homes they loved so well and forced them into chairs of state. Had these men coveted and struggled for place like the politicians of to-day, they would have shocked the public and killed their own influence, and history would have made no mention, or only a scornful mention of their names. From the infancy of the nation down to the year 1829, ninety-five, at least, out of every hundred voters, lived and died without a thought of gaining their livelihood at the public charge.

Now all is changed. The mania for office has been raging more and more fiercely during the last fifty years, till now it attacks all classes of society. We say *mania*, for such it really is—an epidemic, a disease of the body politic, which must have its run, and will then disappear. The motives which prompt the general scramble for place, are usually a desire for the pickings and stealings which are supposed to be incident to it, and a disposition to shirk honest work. "Do you want a clerk?" said an

aspirant for a "situation" to a vendor of mutton pies. "Why do you want to tend my stand?" asked the latter. "Because," was the frank reply, "*I'm awfully hungry.*" The great mass of place-hunters, if equally honest, would make a similar avowal. Considering, however, how paltry is the remuneration of most office-holders, compared with the sums one may earn in a good business, we cannot but be surprised at the general eagerness for office. That fat places—yielding a rich harvest of greenbacks—the few brilliant prizes to a thousand blanks—should be greedily coveted, and the machinery of log-rolling set in motion to obtain them, is not surprising; but, as there is no country on the globe where office confers so little distinction as here, so there is none where, all things considered, it yields so wretched a remuneration. The number of offices in the gift of the American people, which, if honestly administered, will yield to the order of talent required to fill them as much income as a legitimate private business, is exceedingly small. Then, again, the precarious tenure by which offices are held in this country affords another reason to show that they are not worth the sacrifice of time and trouble necessary to obtain them. A party which is victorious at one election may be vanquished at the next, and then ensues an entire change of policy, in which those who but lately abandoned their regular business for the emoluments of office are hurled from their places as abruptly as their predecessors, when they have but just learned how properly to discharge their duties. Few persons are ever known to get rich by office, while thousands who before were slowly but steadily accumulating an independence for themselves and families, have, by holding an office for a few years, acquired a distaste and unfitness for the pursuits of ordinary industry, and been finally reduced to poverty and ruin.

One of the wisest things done by Daniel Webster in his youth, was to refuse the office of clerk of a New Hampshire court, which his father, after much effort, had ob-

tained for him, and which yielded a salary of fifteen hundred dollars a year, a sum which was then probably equal to five thousand dollars to-day, and which to a poor struggling attorney must have been very tempting. If ever a young man of ability had a good excuse for abandoning his chosen calling, and "shelving" himself in a snug office, Daniel Webster would have been excusable for doing so, in view of his own and his father's poverty. "I had felt," he says, "the *res angustæ domi* till my very bones ached." With many pangs, yet resolutely, he followed the advice of Mr. Gore (with whom he had been reading law), which shut him out from this opening paradise, and which was so pithy and sensible that it deserves to be pondered by all young men who are similarly situated: "Go and finish your studies; you are poor enough, but there are greater evils than poverty. Live on no man's favor; what bread you do eat, let it be the bread of independence; pursue your profession, make yourself useful to your friends, and a little formidable to your enemies, and you have nothing to fear." The acceptance of this advice was the more difficult because Mr. Webster had to reconcile his father to this decision. "I knew," he says, "that it would strike him like a thunderbolt. He had long had this office in view for me. Its income would make him, and make us all, easy and comfortable; his health was bad, and growing worse." Yet young Webster mustered resolution, told his father, and, fortunately for himself and for his country, obtained his acquiescence. Had he gratified his father by accepting the appointment, it is doubtful, considering his phlegmatic temperament, whether, instead of becoming the great constitutional lawyer of the country, he would not have remained a clerk to the end of his days. So with Vanderbilt, Stewart, and other great merchants and railroad kings. Can any one doubt that they would have been doomed to poverty and insignificance, had they been appointed when young to petty offices, and held them until the red tape and drudgery had destroyed their elasticity, and unfitted them for great enterprises and affairs?

The truth is, not one office in a hundred is worth striving for by a man of ability, considering the enormous labor the pursuit exacts, the annoyances and chagrin he has to submit to, the loss of self-respect which victory and defeat alike entail, and the time and money he has to spend to qualify him to talk of his "claims on the party." We say annoyances, for considering the liability to criticism, the envy, fault-findings, and perpetual watchfulness and struggles to keep one's place which it involves, an office is anything but a bed of roses. Life under a burning-glass, or a microscope is not the pleasantest of lives, and with the growth of the press in power, ability and watchfulness, every public man, even the most insignificant, begins to live with the light concentrated upon his face, till half his strength is exhausted in keeping his eyes from the glare. But when we add to all this the expense of a pilgrimage to the office-seeker's Mecca, and the *ennui* of hanging about the hotels and loafing about the streets for weeks, whilst one's business is going to ruin at home, all of which may end in,—"My dear Mr. Greenhorn, I feel the full force of your claims; your certificates are of the very highest character, but, though you have been the Ajax of the party in your district, yet it is impossible to deny Mr. Artful Dodger; you must really wait till there is some other vacancy; good morning, sir,"—the universality of scramble for place seems unaccountable.

There is no other pursuit, certainly no legitimate one, which is so full of humiliations, disappointments and vexations; nor is there any in which failure so sours the temper, and writes such sad wrinkles on the forehead. De Maistre has well characterized the capriciousness with which political honors are bestowed, by telling of a French courtier who wrote to a friend that Monsieur —— had just been appointed to a certain important office, "notwithstanding he had every qualification in the world." The miseries of court dependence, as described by Spenser,

do not surpass those experienced by the office-hunter in our own country:

> "Full little knowest thou who hast not tried,
> What hell it is in suing long to bide,
> To lose good days that might be better spent;
> To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
> To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
> To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
> To have thy princess's grace, yet want her peer's;
> To have thy asking, yet wait many years;
> To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares
> To eat thy heart in comfortless despairs;
> To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run;
> To spend, to give, to wait,—to be undone."

Nearly all the celebrated men who have tried public life have borne similar testimony. The Duke of Shrewsbury, who was one of the most conspicuous of the great Whig nobles that invited William of Holland to England, abandoned politics in disgust, and retired to Italy. "I wonder," he wrote with great bitterness to Somers in 1700, "how any man who has bread in England, will be concerned in business of State. Had I a son, I would sooner bind him a cobbler than a courtier, and a hangman than a statesman." "How I long," wrote Lord Cornwallis, when Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, "to kick those whom it is my duty obliges me to court!" Daniel Webster at the end of his life, confessed to his friend Harvey that his political life had been full of disappointment. "If I were to live my life over again," said he, "with my present experiences, I would, under no considerations, allow myself to enter public life. The public are ungrateful. The man who serves the public most faithfully receives no adequate reward. In my own history, those acts which have been, before God, most disinterested and the least stained by selfish considerations, have been precisely those for which I have been most freely abused. No, no! have nothing to do with politics. Sell your iron; eat the

bread of independence; support your family with the rewards of honest toil; do your duty as a private citizen to your country,—but let politics alone. It is a hard life, a thankless life. * * * I have had, in the course of my official life,—which is not a short one,—my full share of ingratitude; but the unkindest cut of all, the shaft that has sunk deepest in my heart, has been the refusal of this Administration to grant my request for an office of small pecuniary consideration for my only son."

Office is sometimes sought for the vulgar notoriety it brings; but oftener for the power and influence it gives; but the chief power it gives at the present day is that of making enemies. Every man who is elected to a desirable place is expected to reward the partizans to whom he chiefly owes his election; and, whatever he may do, he is sure to offend ten to every one he pleases. The honor which office confers, is in the generality of cases, purely imaginary. No man is honored by a public station, unless he honors it; in the very degree in which it adds to his dignity or respectability, he shows himself to be unfit for it. "A fool in high station," it has been well said, "is like the man on top of a mountain; everybody appears small to him, and he appears small to everybody."

Some years ago a gentleman, who had spent all his best years as a political manager, said, just before his death, to the editor of the New York *Liberal Christian*, that though his political life was generally regarded as a success, he himself looked upon it as a failure. By close application and great exertions and sacrifices he had carried measure after measure, secured the nomination or election of this man or that, gained point after point, even when other men had given them up as lost, seen his man in the Senate and the House and the Governor's chair, and had his bill written on the statute book times without number. But, after all, the work had not paid. The men he had worked so hard to elect generally disappointed his expec-

tation. The reputation he had gained by this sort of activity prevented his elevation to the highest offices, and the suspicion of dishonesty shut him out from all lucrative ones. After twenty-five years of work, hard enough to have made his fame as a lawyer, minister, reformer or author, or to have gained a fortune in mercantile life, he was left behind, like a worn-out mule by an advancing army, without name, learning or influence, and with barely a competence for his old age. He had managed the stage for other men to act other men's ideas upon; and while he had done the work, they had secured the applause and the pay. "I am haunted now by the memory of a wasted life." "Here," says the editor, in conclusion, "was a lesson well worth the pondering. This man, of more than ordinary abilities, who had held all sorts of offices up to representative in Congress, and had been looked up to as one of the magnates of his party, summed up the whole account at the end of a quarter of a century in a long-drawn sigh. That sigh was more impressive, more eloquent than any sermon we ever heard. It was a sermon, preached from a pulpit built of years of such work as is put into an oaken or rosewood structure by a joiner's or carver's hand, in tones we shall never forget. Twenty-five years were condensed into that breath."

Macaulay, in a letter to his friend Ellis, expresses his astonishment that any man who might hope to be successful in literature or politics should choose the latter and quit the former. "On the one side," he declares, "are health, leisure, peace of mind, the search after truth, and all the enjoyments of friendship and conversation. On the other side are almost certain ruin to the constitution, constant labor, constant anxiety. Every friendship which a man may have becomes precarious as soon as he engages in politics." In a similar vein, Landor, in his "Imaginary Conversations," strikingly illustrates the miseries of those who forsake the peaceful paths of literature for the jangling pursuits of politics. "How many," says Sir Philip

Sidney, one of the imaginary interlocutors, "who have abandoned for public life the studies of philosophy and poetry, may be compared to brooks and rivers which in the beginning of their course have assuaged our thirst, and have invited us to tranquillity by their bright resemblance of it, and which afterward partake of the nature of that vast body into which they run, its dreariness, its bitterness, its foams, its storms, its everlasting noise and commotion! I have known several such, and when I have innocently smiled at them, their countenances seemed to say: 'I wish I could despise you; but alas! I am a runaway slave, and from the best of mistresses to the worst of masters; I serve at a tavern where every hour is dinner-time, and pick a bone upon a silver dish.'"

We have already alluded to the fact that persons who hold office for some years acquire a distaste for the ordinary pursuits of life. It is, indeed, one of the misfortunes of place and power, that those who have tasted them can be happy neither with them nor without them; they are uneasy upon their eminence, and yet feel a mortification to come down from it, tenaciously clinging to its emoluments, while they are made wretched by its vexations and disappointments. In 1841, in his seventy-fourth year, John Quincy Adams, who had received almost every political honor within the gift of the people, received a letter from a stranger advising him to retire from public life. "The only reason," he records in his diary, "for my postponing this is, that I cannot afford it. There is another which I should have much trouble to overcome, but which I would encounter; that is, *the vacuity of occupation in which I could take an interest.* More than sixty years of incessant active intercourse with the world has made political movement to me *as much a necessity of life as atmospheric air.* This is the weakness of my nature, which I have intellect enough to perceive, but not energy to control. And thus, while a remnant of physical power is left to me to write and speak,

the world will retire from me before I shall retire from the world."

Let every young man then who would succeed in life resolve that, whatever may be his calling, however hard his early struggles, he will not be an office-seeker. Of the thousands who engage in this pursuit, the vast majority must necessarily be unsuccessful; to every prize in the lottery there are a hundred blanks. The increasing greed for place, the readiness with which men sacrifice money, health, integrity and reputation to obtain it, is one of the saddest signs of the times. In view of the sacrifice of personal independence involved in office holding, and of the extent to which public places have been cheapened and degraded till they have become, as Nicholas Biddle once said, "like the tops of the Pyramids, which reptiles may reach as well as eagles," we do not wonder that some of our best men are beginning to decline the acceptance of official appointments which others eagerly covet. One of the ablest lawyers in New England has again and again refused pressing invitations to accept a nomination for Congress, and to a seat on the bench of the Supreme Court of his State, declaring that he will never consent to occupy any public place while he has "wit enough to keep out of the poor-house." We cannot expect giants to stoop to offices that have been degraded by pigmies. They will continue, and in greater numbers, to refuse them, till places of honor and trust cease to be regarded as the mere spoils of political victors and to be regarded as desirable chiefly for the pickings and stealings incident thereto, or that one may shirk honest work, or for the vulgar notoriety they will give, or for the power they will lend him to advance his own selfish ends.

In conclusion, we commend to the attention of every young man who meditates engaging in the scramble for office the advice which Thomas Corwin, of Ohio, is said to have given some years ago, when Secretary at Washington, to one who importuned him for a clerkship. Tell-

ing him to go West, squat, build a cabin, and live like a freeman, he said, "Accept a clerkship here, and you sink at once all independence; your energy becomes relaxed, and you are unfitted in a few years for any other and more independent position. I may give you a place to-day, and I can kick you out again to-morrow; and there's another man over at the White House who can kick *me* out; and the people, by-and-by, can kick him out, and so we go. But if you own an acre of land it is your kingdom, and your cabin is your castle; *you* are a sovereign, and you will feel it in every throbbing of your pulse, and every day of your life will assure me of your thanks for having thus advised you."

Americanisms.

There is a purism which, while it seeks to maintain the integrity of language, in effect stifles its growth.—W. D. Whitney.

WHEN a colony is established in a distant land, its language begins at once to diverge from that of the mother country in various ways. Not only do certain words cease to be used by the one people, and certain other words by the other, but the same word is applied differently by the two peoples; words are compounded differently by them; and the pronunciation and orthography of words will vary, especially through the use of convertible consonants. We have a striking illustration of this in the ancient Scandinavian language, or Old Norse, which a thousand years ago was the common speech of Iceland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, but now exists entire in no one of those countries. When in 1825 the Duke of Saxe Weimar traveled in the United States, and visited a colony of Germans in Pennsylvania, who had been settled there only a quarter of a century, he was surprised to find that, owing to the European wars, which had cut off all intercourse with the Fatherland, the people were speaking a dialect which at home had become obsolete. So, when our forefathers left England, and began to form a new nation three thousand miles away from the mother country, it was inevitable that the differences of climate, natural productions, and national customs, should insensibly lead, in the course of two hundred and fifty years, to some striking differences in the speech of the two countries. These differences, however, thanks to our close connection with the mother

country, the community of culture we have kept up with her, and our admission of her superior authority in matters of learning and literature, have been far fewer and less glaring than might reasonably have been feared. Though sundered from our British cousins by a vast ocean, we have been, and still are, bound with them by invisible ties into one community. The divergence of what Sydney Smith calls "the American language" from the English, is not a tithe so great as the differences in the dialects of England. Still British purism, not to say hypercriticism, finds fault with even our higher styles of discourse, as disfigured by "Americanisms," and in both the tone and material of colloquial talk the discrepancies are, of course, much more marked. Retaining not a few older words, phrases, and meanings which their use rejects, we have failed at the same time to adopt certain others which have sprung up in England since the separation, and have coined yet others of which they have not approved. "Upon all these points," as an able American philologist remarks, "we are, in the abstract, precisely as much in the right as they; but the practical question is, which of the two is the highest authority, whose approved usage shall be the form of correct English speaking."

It is said that when Melville, Queen Elizabeth's ambassador, told her that the Queen of Scots was an inch taller than her majesty, she replied, 'Then she is an inch too tall;" and in much the same spirit British purists have assumed their own customs and usages, linguistic or otherwise, to be the sole absolute standard of taste and propriety. Notwithstanding the fact that our mother tongue came from nowhere in particular, but may be said to have been "at a feast of languages, and stolen the scraps," and though, never for a moment fixed or stationary, it still continues to beg, borrow, steal and assimilate words wherever it can find them, provided only they express new ideas, or render an old one more tersely than before, yet every new term coined on this side of the Atlantic has

been branded and pilloried, whether it originated in circumstances out of the reach of English experience, and met a clamorous necessity of our situation, or not. Too often the growls of the British lion have been echoed by his American imitators, who have not taken the trouble even to ask themselves, "What *is* an Americanism?" and thus get a clear meaning of the term. Before joining in the hue-and-cry against any words thus stigmatized, would it not be well to pause and ask what is meant by the epithet? Is it *any* chance misuse of English of which an American writer may be guilty, or the vulgarism of any clique or locality? Is it just to term all the anomalies and provincialisms which can be raked and scraped together from the slang of the backwoods and the bar-rooms, the dialects of the Mississippi boatmen, the southern sand-hillers, the Bowery boys, Yankee peddlers, the frequenters of pot-houses, as well as from the rubbish and scum of our raw-head-and-bloody-bones literature of the Cobb and Ingraham school, and, cramming them into a thick volume, label them "Americanisms?" As justly might we collect all the slang of London thieves, the "exasperated haitches" of the cockneys, the provincialisms of Yorkshire, the Northumberland "burrs," the patois of Cornwall, the uncouth verbal anomalies of the miners, and mingling with them the comic compounds of Sydney Smith, and the monstrosities of Carlyle and his imitators, label the whole as the common speech of England.

It is absurd to pronounce every word that chances first to see the light in this country an Americanism. No term can justly be so called until it has received the sanction of general and respectable usage. Till recently we have been willing to bow to English authority upon all questions touching English speech; but, as it has been well said, America is now out of her leading-strings, and the nation which has supplied the world with two of the best dictionaries of our tongue, may certainly trust its own judgment and instincts in inventing the new words

it needs. We deny the exclusive right of John Bull to coin new expressions, or that it is a statutory offence to invent on this side of the Atlantic a felicitous, or daring, or useful, expression unauthorized by Todd or Johnson. Our language is no longer the language of England merely; and while she merits our profoundest homage as the land which nursed our tongue in its infancy, and whose scholars have done the most to enrich, refine, and beautify it, we yet hold that any genuine improvement of it,—any legitimate addition to its wealth of words,—should be welcomed from any quarter of the globe where it is spoken. The peculiar circumstances in which the inhabitants of the United States are placed, the objects of nature, the productions of the earth, the employments, the modes of thought, the characteristic tastes and sensibilities, necessitate a corresponding diversity of language, not only between this and the mother country, but even between different parts of our own vast country. Hence, such words as *backwoodsman, congressional, prairie, immigrants, improvements,* and many others, meeting real exigencies of our situation, and describing things which do not exist in England, are entitled to rank, not as Americanisms, but as genuine English; for the English would have coined them had they been in our places.

We have no objection, however, to the term "Americanism," provided it be not deemed equivalent, as it certainly is not, to vulgarism. It is natural enough that lexicographers and schoolmasters should deprecate innovations; but they should not forget that language, like everything else that is living, is progressive. It is an incessant act of creation, ever advancing, ever developing. New circumstances of life, new discoveries of thought, new conquests of art and science, exact new forms of expression. The influences of climate and history are continually producing fresh revolutions in the character of a nation, and the change of character necessitates modifications of the prevalent idiom. The very words we use to-

day will sound strange to a future generation; even our great-grandchildren will detect something quaint and unfamiliar in our speech, many of the terms of which will have become pedantic, vulgar, or obsolete. Who uses "sweetheart" to-day, and yet what term of endearment have we to supply its place? "Commence" is fast displacing "begin," and "plain," "lewd," "odd," "crafty," have very different meanings from those they had a hundred years ago. Woe to that nation whose language has become fixed and unchanging! Fixity of language argues stagnation of thought; a lack of energy, stir, and new ideas; and, conversely, the growth of a nation's vocabulary may be regarded as almost the exact measure of the activity and advancement of a people,— of the development of its general intelligence. The Americanisms we have coined,—the odd-looking words and phrases by which we designate novel thoughts and novel things,—are proofs of our mental activity. They mark our arrival at the stature of manhood, and our intellectual emancipation from the shackles of the old country. The health and vigor of a tree are shown by the vigor with which it sends off new shoots and increases its foliage. When it ceases to do this, decay has set in; the sap no longer flows vigorously, and its branches begin to wither.

Already not a few of our verbal inventions have commended themselves to the good sense of the English people. Many of them by steam presses and steamships have been smuggled into the British islands and their colonies, and, to the great horror of purists, and in spite of their protests, have been indissolubly incorporated with the mother-speech. Philologists have denounced them; but a legion of academicians could not keep them out. By a law as sure in its operation as the laws of physical motion or chemical attraction, the popular coinage of one age becomes the classic phraseology of the next. "Mob," "sham," "advocate," "bully," "banter," "bubble," were all outlaws once; but they were long ago received into

the body of good citizens. "Skate" was a new word in Swift's day, and so was "fanatics" in Fuller's. A writer in the "World" tells us that he assisted at the birth of that most significant word "flirtation," which "dropped from the most beautiful mouth in the world, and which has since received the sanction of our most accurate Laureate in one of his comedies." Dean Swift objected to "hoax," as vulgar, and "humbug" was denounced in the middle of the eighteenth century as "the uncouth dialect of the Huns, the jabber of Hottentots;" but which of the synonyms of these words could supply their place? No one now objects to "suicide," which is certainly pithier than "self-homicide:" yet Phillips, a nephew of Milton, denounced it as a word that should be "hissed off," because it was quite as suggestive of *sus*, a sow, as of the pronoun *sui*. Chaucer imported so many "wagonfuls" of French words into our language, that he was nicknamed "The French Brewer." The truth is, however; that he did hardly more than crystallize in literature verbal forms already in solution among the floating word-material of the day. Robert Mannyng and Richard Rolle, in the fourteenth century, protested vehemently against the "strange Ynglyss,," that is the neologisms of their day. Ascham in the sixteenth century, and Phillips in the seventeenth, had the same horror of foreign and outlandish terms. Arthur Golding in 1565 complained that

> "All good inditers find
> Our English tongue is driven almost out of mind;
> Dismember'd, hack'd, maim'd, rent, and torne,
> Defaced, patch'd, marr'd, and made a skorne.'

These protests were of little avail. Many of the words that knocked for admission into the language were urgently needed, and it threw open its doors and let them in. The philosophic poet Daniel coined the splendid class of words with the prefix *inter*, to denote reciprocation. Coleridge substituted the fine word *ancestral* for the

lumbering *ancestorial.* It is probable that more than thirty thousand words have been added to our recognized vocabulary since the appearance of Johnson's dictionary. Who can doubt that this has been, for the most part, a positive gain? Look at the French words which have forced their way into our language within the present century. *Ennui, blasé, employé, debut, nonchalance, programme, renaissance, soirée,*—how could we dispense with any of these? Had they not met a positive want of the language they would never have established themselves in the dictionary. *Prestige,* meaning the presumption which past successes beget of future ones, is a coinage of rare felicity. *Exploitation, verve, nuances, badinage, finesse, personnel,* which are now hovering on the confines of English, are pretty sure to be domesticated to it. *Persiflage* (light, mocking talk, bantering on grave or comic themes), which Sydney Smith parodies when he speaks of a measure as being rejected "with Percivalism and contempt," is a word for which we have no equipollent one. *Solidarity,* a term invented by the French communists, and popularized by Kossuth in his visit to England and this country, and which signifies a fellowship in gain and loss, in victory and defeat,—that the men or things of which it is affirmed are indissolubly united, or all in the same bottom,—is so convenient that, though new even in France, it is already printed in italic in our dictionaries, *Sociology*, which gives a name to a late work of Herbert Spencer, is so apt a designation of a new science that it will be in vain to struggle against it. Equally convenient are such coinages as *atavism, dissimilation, extradition* and *neutralization.* *Police* and *reconnoitre,* which were once ridiculed by the "Spectator" and other English periodicals, have been so long domesticated in the language that they have almost lost their foreign look.

Cæsar used to say: "Avoid a new word as you would a rock." This rule is often quoted by rhetoricians, and is

certainly a good one within certain limits; but where, had it been rigidly followed, would have been the boasted copiousness of our glorious English tongue? Had every new word been branded and outlawed by our ancestors, would not the language have been dwarfed in its cradle? Let us try, by all legitimate and proper means, to preserve the purity of "the well of English undefiled." Let us mend the walls where they are broken, and gather out the stones, and clear away the weeds and briers, with which it has been overgrown and choked. But let us not prevent its waters from running. Let it be a stream, and not a tank. However desirable it may be to restrain language within due bounds, and especially to check that undergrowth of words which threatens to choke up and impoverish its great roots, it is still more desirable that it should be chartered with sufficient liberty to embrace all the new demands that are made upon it from age to age. It is thus, only, as an able writer has said, that language really becomes, in a figurative sense, the depository of history. It is thus that the phraseology of one age differs from the phraseology of another; and that hence we are enabled to see reflected in the writings of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Defoe, and of the Addisons, the Goldsmiths, and of the Byrons, as in a mirror, not only the vernacular idiom of the period, but its moral and social peculiarities. The languages which are likely to live the longest, and to spread most widely, are those which welcome most readily the terms which advancing knowledge needs; and it is because our English tongue is so catholic and hospitable that we believe it, though five hundred years old, to have only started on its grand career.

The necessity and fitness of many of the words coined in America no sensible man can doubt. What equivalents can be found in Johnson's Dictionary, or Richardson's, for such Western terms as *sawyer*, *cut-off*, and *broad-horn?* These words denote certain peculiarities of the Mississippi river, and convey to those who are familiar with its navi-

gation perfectly distinct ideas. So *to fall* a tree, *to log, to raft, lumbering,* are words which have sprung up in the great forest-belts of our country, but which England lacks, simply because she has no *pineries,* or great forest-belts, where the pine grows almost exclusively, and therefore no such operations as these words describe. In felling the pine trees it is necessary that they should *fall* in a particular direction, lest they lodge ; it is necessary also to haul the *logs* on sleds to a stream, where they may be *rafted* (that is, bound together) and set afloat ; and hence the verbs *to raft,* and *to log.* Again, in traversing these forests, it is often necessary to ascend a stream, disembark, and carry the canoe and its contents over a height of land to another stream flowing in an opposite direction. In the Eastern States this height of land is called a *carry ;* in the North-west, where the *voyageurs* (that is, the men who paddle your canoe on the streams or along the shores of the broad lakes) are of French extraction, it is called a *portage.* In the high Northern regions, where the boats are made of white birch, they are called *canoes.* In the temperate regions, where they are excavated from the trunks of trees, they are called *pirogues* (from the French *pirogue,* originally an Indian word).

A convenient and expressive term, which we had too frequent occasion to use during our late civil war, is *demoralize.* It is the only word which Noah Webster, who spent a life-time in the study of words, ever coined. We have his own statement that it was first used in a tract which he wrote on the French revolution, "about the year 1793." A ludicrous misapplication of the word, in which it was used in an individual instead of its true collective sense, is furnished by the familiar story of a soldier at the battle of Frederickburg. Having skulked to the rear, or to a considerable distance from the fight he was encountered by an indignant officer, who demanded: "What are you here for, you rascal ? Are you wounded ?" "No, colonel," coolly replied the man, "I can't exactly say I'm

wounded; but *I'm dreadfully demoralized.*" Who will deny the utility in a new country of such words as *diggins, betterments,* or *improvements,* and *squatter?* So *buncombe* (applied to electioneering speeches), *caucus, breadstuff* (bread, corn-meal, or flour), *freshet, grit, gully, to lobby, to lynch, mass-meeting, rowdy, to snicker* (to laugh slyly), *to spot* (a rogue), and *splurge,* are terms which, if not imperatively demanded by novel things, practices and customs of the New World, are, at least, very significant and convenient. What can be more ludicrously expressive than the phrase sometimes heard in New England, "He has no *sprawl?*" Could any word express more vividly the inertia of a man who is not only too lazy to sit upright, but even too lazy to stretch himself when he is lying flat on his back? Two other words, which, if not absolutely needed, are very convenient, are the American *outsider* and *comeouter.* The first, according to Professor Marsh, owes its circulation, if not its birth, to the Baltimore Convention, in 1844, which nominated Mr. Polk for the Presidency. Some persons, not members of the convention, having attempted to control its action in an irregular way, a member rose and energetically protested against all interference with the meeting by *outsiders.* The word *comeouter,* which seems to have been coined in defiance of all the ordinary rules of derivation, denotes a class of independent thinkers who, priding themselves upon their contempt for venerable shams and hoary conventionalities, "come out" from the sects and parties that are supposed to maintain them.

Again, many words which have been ridiculed by our transatlantic cousins as belonging to what Sydney Smith called "the American language," are of genuine British stock. They have simply become obsolete in the land of their birth, while they have been kept alive here. As our nasal drawl is from Suffolk, England, where they say *eend* for *end, ceow* for cow, *eout* for *out,* just like New Englanders, so a large portion of our so-called vulgarisms,

which, like chickens, are apt to go home to roost, were hatched on the other side of the Atlantic. Thus the word *bug*, which in America is used as a general appellation of the beetle tribe, is a general old English term. The meaning of the word according to Wedgwood, is simply an object of terror, from the cry of *Bo! Boo! Boh!* made by a person, often covering his face to represent the unknown, to frighten children. In a secondary sense the name is given to insects considered an object of disgust and horror. Thus Bacon says in a letter: "A bug hath bussed in my ears." In England, to-day, the word is appropriated to the noisome inhabitants of beds; and so perfectly obsolete has the old meaning become, that when, some years ago, an edition of Edgar A. Poe's works was published in London, the editor was compelled to alter the title of the story entitled "The Gold Bug" to "The Golden Beetle," to avoid offending English ears. Again, we talk of *big bugs*; but one of the meanings of the word is "swelling," "protuberant"; and in Lincolnshire *bug* is still used for "proud." "In my time, at Rugby school," says Grose, "*bug* was the regular term for conceited, proud." In this sense of the word, Wedgwood thinks, seems to rest on the notion of frightening with a loud noise, blustering threatening, and is thus connected with *bug*, *bug-bear*. Fuller, in his "Pisgah Sight of Palestine," praises the New Jerusalem for being "slicker than any fabric the earth afforded." An intelligent writer states that the Bible has "reckon," and that Southey uses "realize," in the precise sense in which they are used colloquially here. Burke has "pretty considerable," and Miss Burney "I trembled a few." The modern phrase, "let drive," which many suppose to be a vulgarism, was used by Spenser: and the American politician who some years ago expressed his willingness, in a certain contingency, "to let the Union slide," had for his phraseology, if not for his sentiment—as Professor Marsh has remarked,—the best authority, that of Shakspeare. So the word *guess*, which a Yankee has

on his lips as often as a Frenchman has *glory*, is not only used by Locke and Thomas Fuller, but is as old as Chaucer, who says:

> "Her yelwe here was broided in a tresse,
> Behind hire back, a yerde long, I guess,"

Izaak Walton, in his life of Hooker, says "His admission into this place was the very beginning of those oppositions and anxieties which till then this good man was a stranger to; and of which the reader may *guess* by what follows." So the Yankee term *sight*, for "a good many," dates back as far as the fifteenth century, when we find by the writings of a high-born and accomplished lady of that time, that "abomynable sight of monks" was elegant English for a "large company of friars." So *old fogy* is no newcomer, but literally "an old fogy" in the language.

The word *gumption*, signifying acuteness, is said by a writer in "Notes and Queries" to be still in use in the south of Scotland. *Prink*, to deck, to adorn, is used in the Eastern States in precisely the sense in which it was used by Spenser and Shakspeare. *Lam*, which is obsolescent in America now, was a familiar term in England in the time of Charles II. Some etymologists derive it from *lemja*, a Norse word, meaning to give a sound drubbing; a late English writer thinks it is derived from the fate of one Dr. Lamb, an astrologer, who was knocked on the head by the mob in the preceding reign. The verb to *progress*, which English purists have specially branded, may be found in Shakspeare's King John; in Milton's "Treatise of Reformation in England," where we read of certain persons "*progressing* the dateless and irrevoluble circle of Eternity"; and in the folio edition of Bailey's "Universal Dictionary," published in 1755, where it is given as a neuter. Shakspeare uses *learn* in the sense of teach, as in Troilus and Cressida, ii., 1:

> "Toad-stool, *learn* me the proclamation;"

and so do Drayton and even Langlande in the fourteenth century. *Muss*, too, is good Shakspearean English, and the word is used too by Massinger and Fletcher.

No so-called Americanism has been more sharply rated than the employment of *sick* for *ill*, English critics insisting that *sick* shall be applied only to a certain condition of the stomach. Not so Shakspeare, as will be seen by the following extracts:

> *Ligarius.* * * * What's to do?
> *Brutus.* A piece of work that will make *sick* men whole.
> *Ligarius.* But are not some whole that we must make *sick?*

Nor Milton:

> "Despair
> Tended the *sick*, busiest from couch to couch."

Nor Pope:

> "Shut, shut the door, good John! fatigued, I said;
> Tie up the knocker; say I'm *sick*,—I'm dead."

It is said that the word *ill*, in the present English sense, does not occur once in King James' version of the Bible.

Another supposed Americanism is *baggage*, which is said to be improperly used for *luggage*. The best English lexicographers, however, define *luggage* as "heavy cumbrous baggage, or package,"—that is, for example, the bulky, ponderous moveables which an army, or a family when moving, transport with them. The phrase "bag and *baggage*" is one of the most familiar in English literature. A late English writer, Rev. W. L. Blackley, in his "Word-Gossip," speaking of the American use of *slim*, as applied to attendance, says that "it is nearer the original meaning in which the word came to us than either of the senses in which we are wont to use it. It does not strike us as awkward to say, 'there was a *thin* attendance,'

which is equivalent to the ordinary meaning of *slim ;* and still less do we object to the expression 'a bad attendance,' which is the sense in which we first received the word, from the German *schlimm*, 'bad,' its root idea in that language probably signifying 'crooked,' 'irregular.'" So *clever*, in the sense of "good-natured," *plunder* in the American sense, *overslaugh*, and *wilt*, may all be defended by the best English authority. The truth is, while John Bull has been sneering at us for our vulgarisms, it is *we* who have adhered to, and *he* who has departed from, the ancient and sound usage in regard to these words; it is the island and not the continent, that has corrupted the tongue.

The force of these considerations our English censors are beginning at last themselves to acknowledge. They are beginning to admit that the vast number of words, obsolete or provincial in England, which were brought to this country generations ago, which have cropped up among us, and which, when met with in American writers, have an outlandish look to an Englishman, are a clear gain to the language. A late number of "Blackwood" has an article on this subject, in which it admits that these words and phrases have been branded, very unjustly with the name of Americanisms, when many of them are not only pure Anglicisms, but made English for evermore in the pages of Spenser, Shakspeare and Ben Jonson. It is not the first time in history that the language of a people has been preserved in greater purity in the colonies than in the mother country. The descendants of the Greek colonists of Asia Minor, it is said, speak a language much nearer to the old Greek than do the citizens of Greece. Dutch resembles the old German more closely than the present dialect of Prussia; and Spanish is more Latin-like than the Italian. Among these legitimate English words, current in America, but little known in English, "Blackwood" cites these: *Ben-*

der—"to go on a bender"—from *bend*, to crook the elbow in lifting the glass to the mouth; *fall*, the beautiful synonym of "autumn;" *meech*, an old Shakspearian word for "skulk;" *platform*, in its political sense, a term frequently employed by the writers of the Commonwealth; *rile*, to vex a person by exciting his temper; *sag; slick*, as used in the phrase, "he goes slick about his business;" *slide*, in the sense of which we have already spoken; *splurge*, to swagger and make a great fuss and display of one's wealth; *squelch*, of the old English use of which we have an example in the old ballad in which it is said that St. George "did the dragon fell, and gave him a plaguy *squelch;*" *squirm*, to wriggle like an eel or worm; *stent* or *stint*, and *wilt*.

All these words, excepting *bender*, the critic in "Blackwood" declares "are worthy of the favor of English writers and speakers, and can boast an ancient, and in some cases an illustrious, ancestry." Another class of words, which the critic deems true Americanisms, such as "buncombe," "lobbying," "wire-pulling," "log-rolling," "axe-grinding," he thinks the purists will not be able long to shut out from the dictionary, especially as the English are becoming very familiar with the practices they describe. But a third class of Americanisms, which are clamoring for admission into the language, he pronounces "offensive," and declares should be resisted at the threshold. These are *donate, locate; balance*, for a part of anything; *to post* or *post up* a person; *pled* for "pleaded"; *avails* for "proceeds"; *illy* for "ill"; *quite* for "very"; *retiracy, boss, at that*, as in the sentence, "He has a scolding wife, and an ugly one *at that;*" and many others which are regarded as slang as well by educated Americans as by Englishmen. For these words, the meanings of which are fully expressed by old and legitimate words, there is no necessity whatever; and we are perfectly willing that the interlopers should be handed

over to the critic, to be excommunicated. It must be admitted, too, that some of our words, which are legitimate enough of themselves, are too often *overworked*, as Mr. Choate said of the sheriff's participle. As Dominie Sampson could never open his mouth without letting out "Prodigious!" so Americans are sure to "guess," "reckon," "presume," "calculate," whenever they give an opinion.

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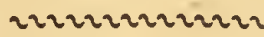

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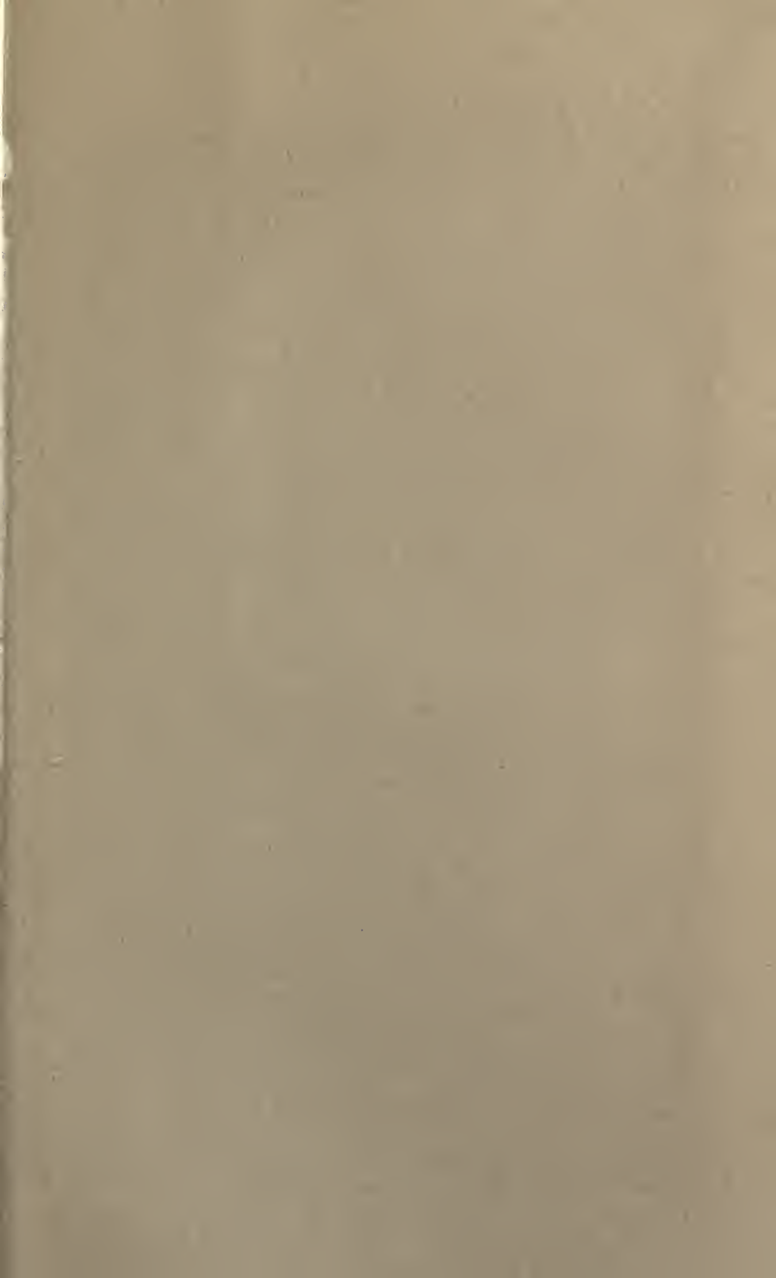

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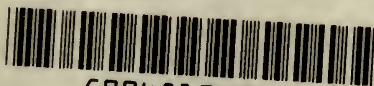
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